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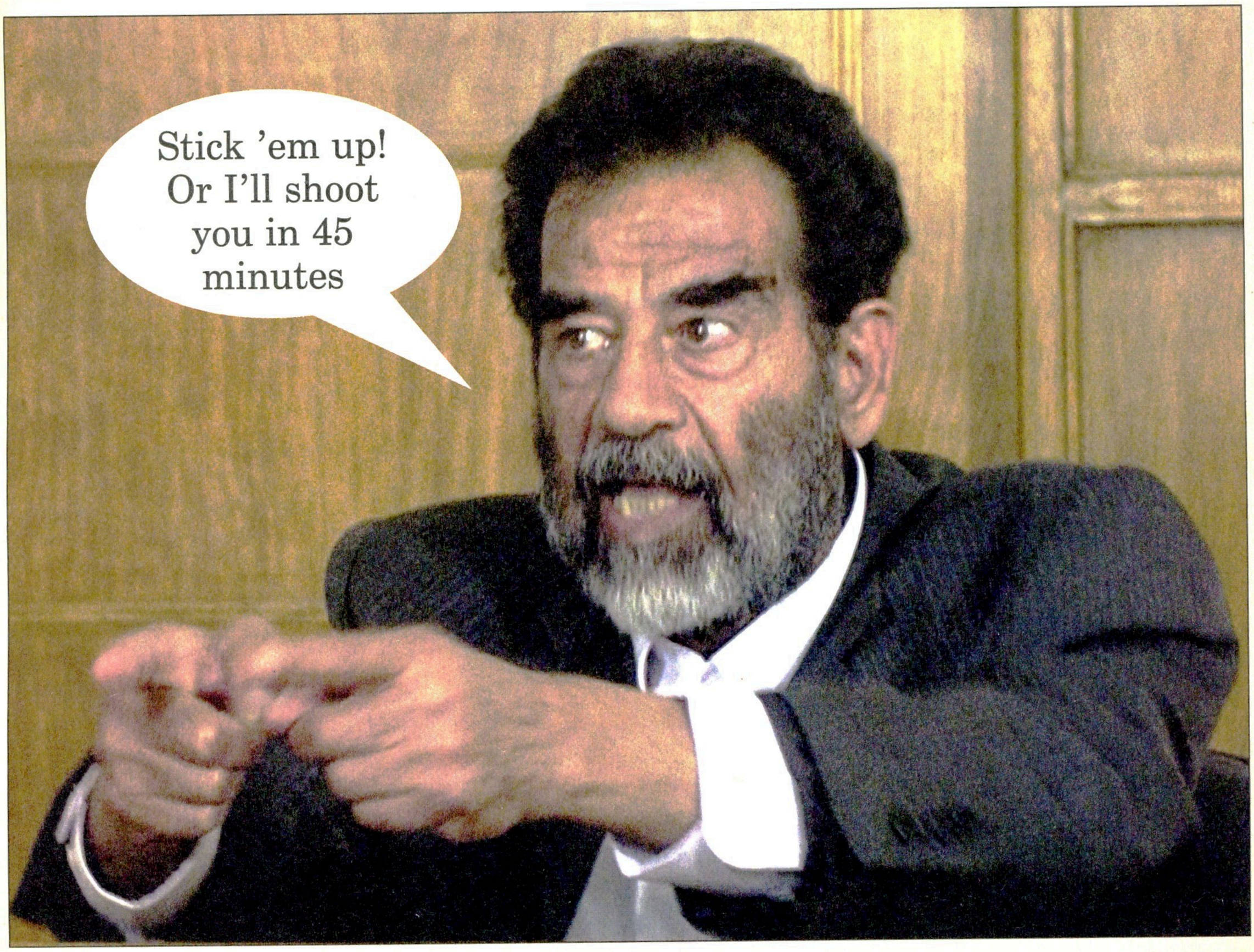

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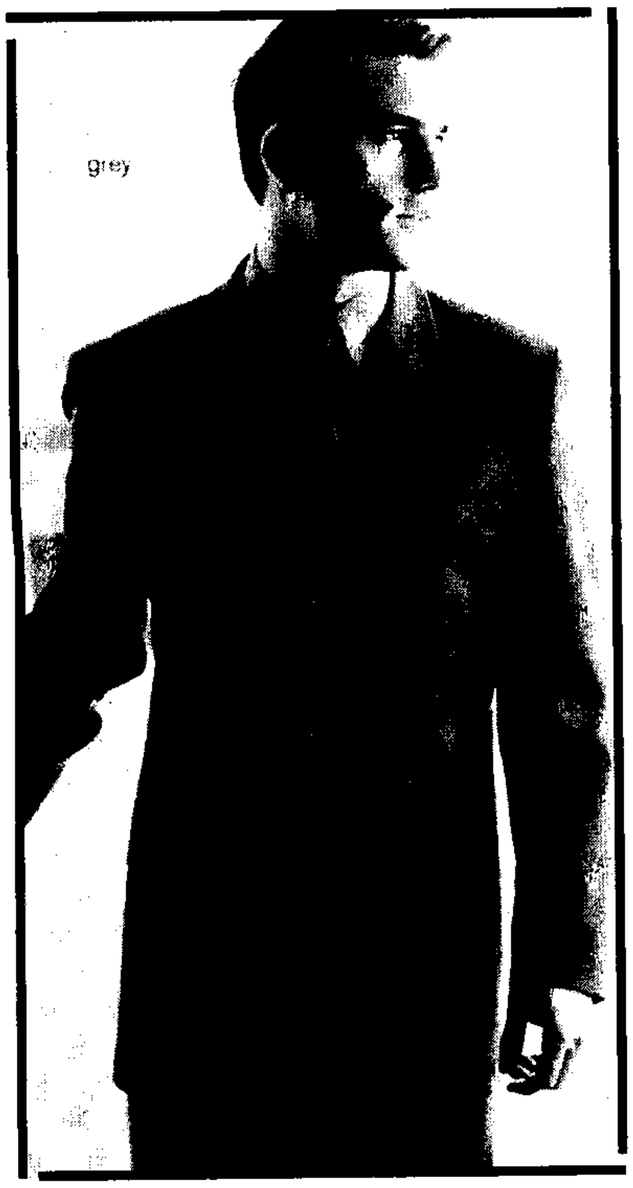

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Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ. **Distributed** by P.E. Distributions, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. 020 7437 4017.

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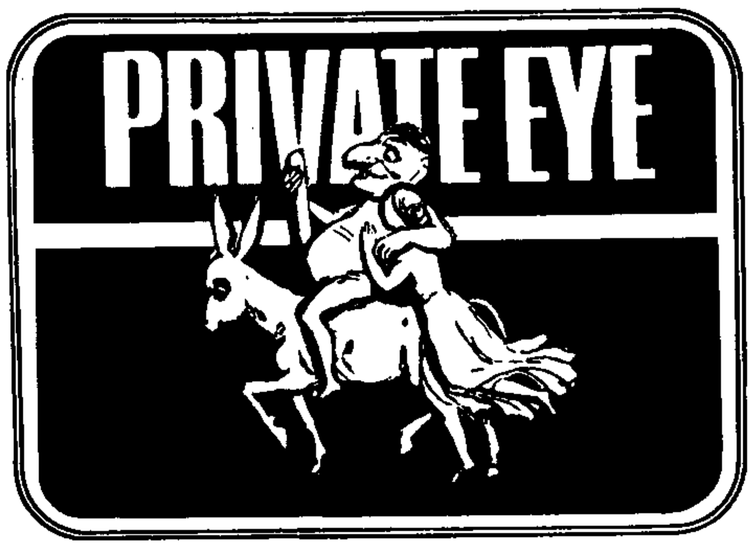

MORE strange news on Mapeley, the company composed of international speculators and billionaires that persuaded the Inland Revenue and Customs to flog almost all their buildings to its subsidiary in a tax haven.

The problem for the Mapeley billionaires was that they couldn't administer the buildings for what the Revenue and Customs agreed to pay them, so for at least two years they have been begging the government for much more money. Several times the *Eye* has asked the Revenue if any new deal had been struck with Mapeley. Again and again the official Revenue reply has been that "negotiations are still continuing" and no deal has been struck.

Against that consider this fascinating reply from "Red" Dawn Primarolo, paymaster-general, to Labour backbencher Denzil Davies on 15 June. He wanted to know how much taxpayers' money had gone in the last three years to Mapeley Steps Contractor Ltd, the company that leases the tax and customs offices to the Revenue and Customs, having itself leased them from a Mapeley subsidiary in the tax haven of Bermuda. Her answer was: in 2001-2 £302m; in 2002-3 £310m; in 2003-4, £309m.

These vast sums need to be compared with the national audit office (NAO) whitewash on the Mapeley affair, which states that, according to the contract, the Revenue and the Customs will pay Mapeley Steps Contractor Ltd "an average annual charge of £170m". How did an average annual charge of £170m become in the last three years an average annual payment of £307m? Could it possibly be that the government has found convenient ways of paying Mapeley a vast sum in excess of what it contracted, in order to get the company out of its difficulties?

The *Eye* pressed the Revenue for a reply. Here it is, in full: "The figures given by the paymaster-general on 10 June for payments to Mapeley Steps Contractor Ltd are made up of a set amount and costs such as utilities, minor and major works for the Revenue, Customs and Valuation Office agency." So these "utilities, and minor and major works" cost the taxpayer nearly as much every year as the entire annual payment the government agreed to make to Mapeley.

The details of the Mapeley contract are "commercially confidential", but on the face of it Primarolo's answer is very hard to justify. In 2001, for instance, the Mapeley Steps Contractor accounts show the amount paid by the government for utilities for half the year was a mere £10m. There is something very odd going on here, and Mr Davies should keep pressing "Red" Dawn for more detail.

THE NEOPHILIACS

"Shazza is new Wazza." — *Sun*. (Translation: Maria Sharapova is the new Wayne Rooney.)

MARIA SHARAPOVA may be women's champion at Wimbledon, but in Richard Desmond's newspapers she rejoices in a different title – "the OK! reading starlet, 17".

Her announcement in a press conference that she passed time during the rain breaks in her semi-final by reading the Desmond-published magazine was mentioned no fewer than four times in one day by his papers the *Star* and *Express*.

Sadly none of them found room for Sharapova's response to the next question. Asked "was it good?" she replied: "No, it was quite boring."

Football crazy...

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"IN THE last election, and I think the one before that, the *Scotsman* supported Blair, and we were very happy about that," Sir David Barclay told the *Guardian* in January. Asked if a Barclay-owned *Telegraph* would still function as the house organ of the Conservative Party, he replied: "Certainly not."

Shock, horror! Barclay hastily issued a statement reassuring staff and readers that he wouldn't change the traditional allegiance of the *Torygraph*. But perhaps his original comment wasn't so far from the truth after all. Lord Gnome understands that the prime minister rang the Barclay twins two weeks ago and that an extremely friendly conversation ensued.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The referee's decisions have robbed the retail trade of millions of pounds of potential sales.

— David Southwell, British Retail Consortium, on Euro 2004, quoted on BBC website.

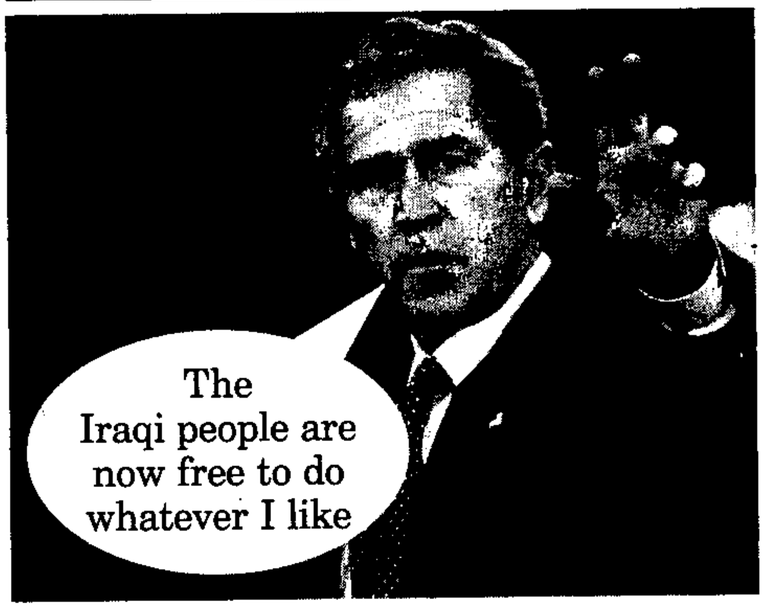
"*UNITED offer boy wonder the perfect place to find his feet*" was the *Sunday Times* headline on an article last month by Peter Schmeichel, former Manchester United goalkeeper.

The "boy wonder" in question was the hottest property in English football, the young Everton striker Wayne Rooney. But where should Rooney go?

Schmeichel conceded that Chelsea would pay more money – £60m – for him. "But," he went on, "you have to remember that Rooney himself – and his advisers Proactive Sports Management – have a say in this as well... Proactive has an important role to play in Wayne's life over the coming months. I must declare my own position here. Proactive also represents me."

Peter Schmeichel's connection with Proactive and its dynamic founder Paul Stretford does not end there. He still has 300,000 shares in the agency, and a director of one of Stretford's companies is also a director of Schmeichel's company, modestly called Great Dane Promotions. Not only that, but the Wimslow headquarters of Proactive is graced with a life-size statue of... Peter Schmeichel.

Now that Schmeichel has become a leading pundit on the English football scene – he was one of the three top pundits on the BBC during Euro 2004 in Portugal – no doubt he will take every opportunity in future to make his connections with Proactive absolutely plain.



Street Of Shame

AS THE *Sun*'s circulation continues to slide (nearly 5 percent down in the last year), editor Rebekah Wade is prepared to try almost anything to pull in the readers, including a hoary old classic that many local papers consider too naff to bother with these days: a competition to find "the bonniest baby in Britain".

The 16-page pullout which the paper printed on 29 June featured 300 snapshots of the shortlisted candidates alongside their names and locations, its design almost identical to that of Wade's last big circulation booster, the "Name and Shame" campaign in the News of the World.

Naturally, the dozens of pictures which featured their subjects in the bath were nothing like the photos of artist Betsy Schneider's daughter between the ages of 9 weeks and five years which the *Sun* found so objectionable when they were exhibited back in March. "What kind of mother puts on display photos of her young daughter in the nude?" demanded the *Sun* on that occasion, reeling in an NSPCC spokesman to tell them that "the inappropriate thoughts of some adults must be taken into consideration" and pointing out that the exhibition was "feared to be attracting paedophiles".

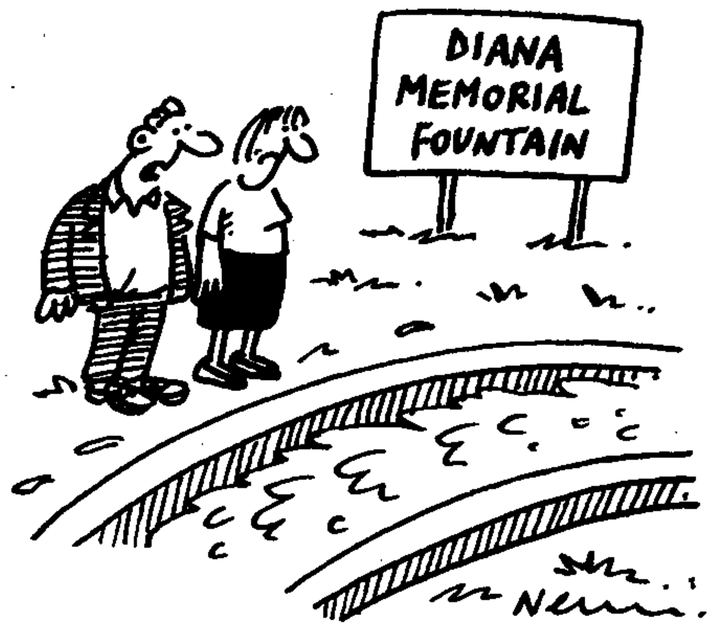
***SPECTATOR* columnist Peter Oborne was unimpressed by the good showing of the UKIP in last month's local elections, dismissing them as "a rackety collection of conmen, perjurers, convicted criminals and semi-racists."**

How unlike his own colleagues at the *Spectator*, who include self-proclaimed "soi-disant anti-semite" and Enoch Powell fan Taki Theodoracopoulos, who in 1984 spent two months in prison for cocaine possession and later stumped up the cash for Neil Hamilton's failed court action against Mohamed Fayed.

FURTHER debate over the nature of truth at the *Daily Mirror*, whose "£1m flights giveaway" with Ryanair has angered the Advertising Standards Authority.

The ASA objected that the flights were not being given away at all since applicants had to pay taxes, fees, airport charges and a hefty supplement if they wanted to travel at the weekend. In its defence the paper pointed out that "as well as free, 'giveaway' could mean 'a price that is very low' or 'very cheap'".

But as ASA pointed out, the flights in question were neither: some, in fact, were *more* expensive than those available outside the promotion. Perhaps the *Mirror* should have argued that, like certain alleged photos of squaddies in Iraq, they were in fact a contemporaneous re-staging of flights that actually *were* free.



"It's what she would've wanted – a terrific embarrassment to the Royal Family"

"I'm so pleased you're pregnant, I thought it was childhood obesity"

ADAM HELLIKER'S DIARY

A FEW pages from the diary of veteran gossip-columnist Adam Helliker:

1 September 2002: In his Mandrake diary for the *Sunday Telegraph*, Helliker rejoices in the ostracism of "loose-mouthed ex-copper" Ken Wharfe, former bodyguard to the Princess of Wales. Helliker quotes one society lady: "He is a swine for what he has done, the fact that he has made money from Diana."

15 December 2002: Now writing the *Mail on Sunday* diary, Helliker offers his profound sympathy to Diana's mother, Frances Shand-Kydd, some of whose most cherished souvenirs of her daughter have been stolen by burglars.

13 April 2003: Helliker rejoices in the news that James Hewitt "is finally doing the decent thing: he is leaving Britain for good". Hewitt, he adds, will "never lose his reputation as a cad" for trying to sell Princess Diana's love-letters.

26 October 2003: Helliker writes a lengthy feature for the *MoS* about Paul Burrell's "betrayal" of Princess Diana. The butler, he claims, "was plundering Diana's Kensington Palace rooms, squirrelling away a large collection of items with the intention of making a financial killing".

4 July 2004: Princess Diana's personal address book has been bought by a private collector, the *Mail on Sunday* reveals. It was sold for £25,000 by a former boyfriend of Vanessa Corringham, who used to work for the Diana memorial fund. It seems the boyfriend purloined the book and then forged a letter from Corringham claiming he was authorised to sell it. Who is this caddish swine? A brief statement from the *Mail* identifies the culprit: "Adam Helliker has been dismissed from his position as *Mail on Sunday* diary editor and has left the company."

Will he now "do the decent thing" and leave the country as well?

THE *Daily Mirror* pronounced itself astonished by the "amazing diva demands" of film star Sharon Stone, devoting an entire double-page spread to how her attempts to "pack in the perks" when negotiating a contract had left producers with "more than they bargained – or budgeted – for".

As a comparison, the paper offered some of the "outrageous demands" of other celebrities, but sadly, it found no room to detail the £2m settlement – including compensation for loss of office, loss of bonus and loss of share options – that lawyers for Piers Morgan are demanding from the Mirror group after his sacking as editor two months ago.

THERE was a crisis meeting at the *New Statesman* two weeks ago to discuss plummeting sales.

As *Eye* readers will know, the *NS* political pundit John Kampfner has a ready-made solution to the problem: sack editor Peter Wilby and replace him with, er, John Kampfner. Despite vigorous lobbying, however, owner Geoffrey "Paymaster" Robinson has so far resisted his entreaties.

These rebuffs are beginning to take their toll on Kampfner, it seems. He burst into the crisis meeting, shaking like a midget jelly and howling that "Nobody will bloody speak to me because of the mad editorial line the magazine takes! How can I get scoops from government ministers when we accuse them of being war criminals and Nazis every week?" He started raving about the "far left" stance of the paper, and saying that it made his job "impossible" – and was "damaging the Kampfner brand, never mind the *New Statesman*'s".

A tear ran down Kampfner's cheek as he left the office. The ensuing gob-smacked silence was broken by a loud giggle from fun-loving deputy editor Cristina Odone, who asked: "What *is* it with you people on the left?"

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

CATHERINE Ostler, editor of the London *Evening Standard*'s pisspoor magazine *ES*, has a keen eye for talent.

One of her new recruits is travel writer Albert Read, who recently wrote a flowery account of a lavish freebie he and Mrs Read had taken in Paris. Strangely omitted from the copy was the identity of his wife – a certain Catherine Ostler.

Ostler has also commissioned a series of columns on London life by Piers Paul Read – who, by happy chance, is her father-in-law.

THE "guest" restaurant reviewer in the *Evening Standard* on 23 June was David Furnish, aka Mrs Elton John. Furnish may not know much about food, but he does know a lot of famous people whose names he duly dropped into the copy.

First up was gorblimey expert Janet Street Porter, whom Furnish whisked off to a steakhouse in Hammersmith. The second guest was Richard James, tailor to the stars, whom he took to a down-at-heel dive called Vic Naylor in Spitalfields.

Surprisingly, Vic Naylor got a glowing review, illustrated with pictures of founder/owner, Peter Spanton. What Furnish forgot to mention was that Spanton is Janet Street Porter's live-in lover, and that the couple happen to be best friends with Mr and Mrs Elton John – and that they are regular house guests of the cuddly pop star and his boyfriend at their homes in Virginia Water and the South of France.

OWNERS may come and go, but the *Torygraph* still knows how to keep up some traditions.

Despite the demise of its formal graduate training scheme, there has been good news for at least one new recruit. Step forward Henry "have I heard that name before somewhere?" Deedes, twentysomething grandson of Dear Bill, who has decided to try his hand at hackery.

Will young Deedesh be subbing the gardening page? Not likely. Henry's six-month training contract will include stints on London Spy, the sports desk and the Press Association's training scheme for reporters.

PS: When *Telegraph* managing editor Sue Ryan told the *Press Gazette* about the demise of the graduate training scheme, she said: "The quality of people who apply for the *Telegraph* traineeship is outstanding." No doubt she was thinking of outstanding scribblers like, er, Bryony Gordon, whose previous work experience as Sue Ryan's niece must have come in handy when she applied.

MEN IN THE EYE

THE BARCLAYS

HACKS at the *Telegraph* whooped with delight when news arrived that they had been sold to the Barclay twins. An understandable reaction, given that they would otherwise have been delivered into the custody of the dour and dreadful David "Rommel" Montgomery. Even so, industry secretary Patricia Hewitt might wish to pause a moment before obeying the hacks' plea that she should let the deal through without a referral to the media regulator Ofcom.

As guardian of the public interest, Hewitt can ask Ofcom to consider whether the new owners will ensure "accurate presentation of news" and "free presentation of opinion". There are many reasons to think they won't. Allowing the Barclay twins to control the *Telegraph* titles is like hiring a militant temperance campaigner to run an off-licence, since they are fiercely hostile to the main function of journalism – disclosure.

In *Eye* 1108 we revealed Sir David Barclay's reaction to a tiny diary item in the London *Evening Standard* noting that he was not in the best of health. This information had been put in the public domain by Sir David himself, in February this year, as an excuse for not testifying before the Delaware judge Leo Strine. Yet when the *Evening Standard* alluded to it three months later, Barclay's solicitors fired off a fusillade of threatening letters – not only to the *Standard* but also to its sister papers the *Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday*, demanding a corporate undertaking that they would never again repeat this "clear invasion of Sir David's privacy".

Now the same solicitors, Lovells, have swung into action again to protest at a profile that appeared in the *Standard* on 23 June. The piece began with the prediction that "the Barclay brothers may not appreciate this article", and so it proved. Sir David and Sir Frederick immediately demanded – got – an apology for the suggestion that they were separated from their wives, although this has been asserted in dozens of articles down the years without a single denial until now. Meanwhile Sir David's son Aidan Barclay – chairman-presumptive of the *Telegraph* group – is warning the *Standard* never again to mention that he has a house in London, even though no detail of the address or postal district was given. According to Aidan's lawyers it is a scandalous invasion of his privacy even to mention the name of a city where he owns a property.

We have been here before. Eight years ago the Barclay brothers took legal action under French privacy laws against the *Observer* (which is available at a few Paris news-stands) over an article by John Sweeney. They claimed Sweeney had "infringed their privacy" and exposed them to the risk of "kidnapping, deprivation of freedom and terrorist attacks" by mentioning the well-known fact that they had a residence in the tax-haven of Monaco. Even more ludicrously, they also objected to the disclosure that they were "born within minutes of each other on 17 October 1934". Happily, the Tribunal de Grande Instance threw the case out and ordered the Barclays to pay the *Observer* 20,000 francs in costs and damages.

One of the most startling aspects of the French case was the Barclays' claim that a drawing which illustrated the article – a caricature of the brothers – breached their "absolute right to their own image". This must be bad news for Nicholas Garland and other *Telegraph* cartoonists, who infringe the "absolute right" of Tony Blair, Gordon Brown etc to their own image pretty well every day.

In short the Barclays demand privileges for themselves which their newspapers don't grant to others. But will the *Telegraph* titles now be obliged to grant this special protection to friends and associates of the twins as well? A statement by the Barclays, printed on the *Daily Telegraph*'s front page two weeks ago, insisted that "we have no interest in interfering with the editorial policy of the titles", and most media commentators say that their record at the *Scotsman* confirms this.

Tim Luckhurst, a former deputy editor and editor of the *Scotsman*, disagrees. Writing in the *Independent*, he pointed out that after the Barclays bought the paper its editorial stance became "pro-market where once it was broadly social-democratic, Eurosceptic where previously it was Europhile, and sceptical about the value of devolution when, traditionally, it was the leading standard-bearer for home rule". These and other changes are usually attributed to Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill, the twins' absurdly-coiffured Scottish *gauleiter*; but according to Luckhurst "it was made abundantly clear that the editorial instructions conveyed by the publisher were those of the proprietors".

The bashful Barclays weren't shy of making their other prejudices known. Luckhurst recalls that they became "furious" if the *Scotsman* ever published a critical word about the royal family or their dear friend Margaret Thatcher, and showed intense "proprietorial interest" in any coverage of the retail tycoon Philip Green, an old chum and business associate. Since Green – who is currently trying to buy Marks & Spencer – now appears in the City pages every day, *Telegraph* business hacks had better watch their backs.

Will Ofcom be given the chance at least to consider if the Barclays are fit and proper people to own a national newspaper? If so, another piece of evidence the regulators should consult is the verdict handed down by Judge Leo Strine in Delaware four months ago. Although his criticisms of Conrad Black hogged the headlines, he didn't spare the Barclay boys either. "The Barclays knew that they were concealing… extremely important information," he declared. "They were aware of Black's obligations to [Hollinger] International and his infidelity, yet remained silent while he misled the International board… In public filings in the United States and Canada, the Barclays have released information that is of questionable accuracy."

Strine concluded that "it is difficult for me to give as much credit to the Barclays' factual arguments as they would like". Not exactly a ringing endorsement of men who now look set to own one of Britain's most venerable national newspapers. As the *Torygraph*'s nonagenarian cub reporter Bill Deedes might ask: shome mishtake, shurely?

PS: Dominic Lawson has been tipped to edit the *Daily Telegraph* ever since Sir David Barclay praised him (in a rare interview earlier this year) as "a very good editor". But suggestions that Lawson has been striving to ingratiate himself with the twins are wide of the mark, according to Prof Roy Greenslade of the *Grauniad.*

"My understanding," Greenslade wrote last week, "is that Lawson has not only never met either of the Barclay brothers but he has also never spoken to them". True, but scarcely the whole truth. As both Lawson and Greenslade are well aware, the man in day-to-day charge of the newspaper group will be Aidan Barclay, whom Lawson certainly does know. Aidan's wife Ferzana – nicknamed "Fizzy" – is a good friend of the Hon Rosa Monckton, aka Mrs Dominic Lawson.

PPS: The Barclay twins have no greater champion in the Street of Shame than *Observer* business editor Frank Kane, who recently recalled his outrage when the Delaware judge Leo Strine "blackened the name of Sir David Barclay, who was accused of feigning illness to avoid appearing in court, a gross defamation". Kane demanded that Strine should "retract the slur" forthwith.

When the Barclays won the *Torygraph* auction, Kane treated his readers to another long feature. "Throughout the entire course of the negotiations to take over the *Telegraph*, the Barclays kept up a regular correspondence with this newspaper," he boasted on 27 June. "The letters belie the image of the Barclays as reclusive and secretive tycoons manipulating events from their Channel Islands fortress, which is how many have sought to portray them."

The Barclays are indeed secretive tycoons who inhabit a Channels Island fortress, but Frank Kane would never dare say so. When he was news editor of their *Sunday Business* newspaper five years ago, the Barclays underwrote hospital treatment for his young son who had meningitis, and since Kane moved to the *Observer* they have continued to pay for his boy's treatment.

This is all very much to the Barclay brothers' credit, but mightn't *Observer* editor Roger Alton feel that this disqualifies his business editor from providing impartial coverage of the contest for the *Telegraph*?

Number crunching

£20m	■ Fortune the *Daily Mirror* believes Maria Sharapova is set to make
£30m	■ Fortune the *Mail on Sunday* says she will make
£50m	■ Fortune the *Sunday Times* says she will make
£100m	■ Fortune the *Daily Mail* says she will make

"Lie back and try not to think of England"

THE NEOPHILIACS

"The second world war is clearly the new rock'n'roll." — *Sunday Times.*

"Bratislava is the new Prague." — BBC News 24.

"Florists are the new chefs." — *Woman & Home.*

"Green is the new black, says funeral director." — *Leicester Mercury.*

"Is Puglia the new Tuscany?" — *Observer Food Monthly.*

"Blue is now the new green." — *Waitrose Food Illustrated.*

"Wayne Rooney is the new Harry Potter." — *AS* newspaper, Spain.

"Are men the new women?" — The *Times.*

IN THE TEAROOM

MUCH anxious grumbling in the tearoom about Charles Clarke's five-year plan for educashun, educashun and educashun.

Since the foundation hospitals vote and the Iraq crisis, backbenchers wanting to maintain any kind of street cred have had to threaten to revolt against reforms that smell too "new" Labourish or that promise to benefit the middle class more than the lumpen proletariat. Hence all the defiant talk about resisting any return to selection, allegedly being plotted by that public school toff Tony Blair and his sinister henchman, education adviser Andrew "Misnomer" Adonis.

A tricky moment for the education secretary then? Fortunately for everyone, Mr Clarke prefers not to go naked into the Commons chamber. In advance of the big launch, his cronies have fanned out across Westminster dressing-up the new policies to suit different tastes.

The egalitarian die-hards are being told about an almighty row in last week's cabinet, where John Prescott and Ian Macartney (with a little help from Gordon Brown) supposedly pulled the teeth of the original Adonis proposals and won a great battle for the working class. The message is: selection's out, the nobs have lost, so you can support the plan with a clear social conscience.

But for those who are more enthusiastically Blairite and those who have only the teeniest majorities (and they're often the same people), the messages are rather different: Mondeo woman doesn't want her kids stuck in the same school as those kids from "challenging" backgrounds who disrupt classes, sell drugs and stab other pupils in the playground. She and her partner are beginning to lean towards the Tories' choice agenda. How to get her back? Smoke and mirrors, of course.

Okay, so academic selection is out; but the array of specialist schools, faith schools and city academies offers scope for some selection on the sly. The joyriders off the council estate can't play the flute or program computers, so they won't be going to specialist music or science schools. They can, however, demonstrate a familiarity with football, so they can be corralled into specialist sports schools without being made to feel inferior. And giving teachers freedom from targets, diktats and directives will mean they'll go round telling parents how much better everything is getting – just in time for the election.

'Quintus Slide'

THE new enthusiasm in Downing Street for city academies (state schools with wealthy sponsors) has opened a new, rich vein for Tony's cronies.

An organisation has been formed to persuade millionaires to give some of their money (and their names) to these new academies. It is called the Academy Sponsors Trust and has three co-chairs: Lord Harris of Peckham, formerly Philip Harris, the Thatcherite carpet king; Lord Carey of Clifton, the former Archbishop of Canterbury; and Lord Levy of Mill Hill, Blair's tennis partner and "special envoy" in the Middle East.

The chief executive has already been appointed. She is Rona Kiley, wife of Bob Kiley, the American boss of the London Underground. A dinner has been arranged on 13 October for anyone interested in giving their names (or money) to the new academies.

All three chairs and the chief executive will be there. But who is paying? The trust will meet half the cost and the other half will be paid for by the department for education (ie taxpayers).

MORE news from Pimlico and St James Branch Labour party where the "colleagues" are eagerly preparing for their 14 July branch meeting at 10 Downing Street and Cherie Blair "will hope to join the meeting".

Previously some of the un-reconstructed comrades were getting hot under the collar as only certain members had been invited – and that didn't include any of them! Sadly, little attempt appears to have been made to mend fences. The latest newsletter from branch secretary Jason Thomas Williams contains this devastating news for smelly-socked old Labourites still bridling at missing the opportunity of meeting Cherie Blair: "So that we might arrive at No 10 together we will meet in the Red Lion in Whitehall. There will be a limitation on numbers that No 10 can accommodate, so if the number wanting to come gets too large we may have to disappoint a few, but with any luck we should be able to include everyone who wants to go." Well, apart from old lefties that is!

THE 1,600-strong Surrey South Conservative Association has selected the upstanding *Times* journalist Michael Gove as its candidate at the general election. Gove is assured victory in this safest of Tory seats, but might the retired colonels and blue-rinse ladies have given Gove such a ringing endorsement had they known of his less than upstanding brush with Inspector McKnacker some years back?

Today Gove is an exemplary supporter of Michael Howard's tough policy on law and order. But on a Saturday night in 1990 in Aberdeen, a trainee reporter by the name of Michael Gove was apprehended having thrown a traffic cone from the city's main street – Union Street – off a viaduct to another street below.

Grampian police didn't waste any time bundling a somewhat tired and emotional Gove into the back of a police van, where he was carted off to assist Inspector McKnacker with his inquiries.

JUST FANCY THAT!

Procedure for selecting judges 'seriously flawed'

Daily Telegraph p. 12

Violent criminals need not go to jail, says Lord Woolf

Daily Telegraph p. 13

ONE of parliament's lesser known bodies is the House of Lords select committee on economic affairs, set up each session "to consider economic affairs". This year it appointed a sub-committee to examine the budget – especially the chancellor's new measures to stamp out tax avoidance.

The committee's report, published on 25 June, makes little or no reference to the growing use of "off-balance sheet" deals that inflate profits and reduce taxes. This is a pity, since the Lords sub-committee had the advantage of the advice of one of its most experienced members, the Rt Hon Lord Wakeham, a qualified accountant with special knowledge of off-balance sheets deals that is unsurpassed, even in the House of Lords – he is former chairman of the audit committee of the disgraced US energy trader, Enron.

THERE's still no sign of a truce in the uncomradely feud between deselected Reading East MP Jane Griffiths and her neighbour Martin Salter, MP for Reading West, despite threats from chief whip Hilary Armstrong to expel Griffiths from the Labour party if she doesn't pack it in. Might one even call it a vendetta?

Apparently not. "The word 'vendetta' is not one I would ever use as I do prefer English vocabulary," Jane Griffiths writes to an inquirer. "However, I will not tolerate interference in my constituency. All he has to do it stop doing it. It's a fact that a leaflet and letter in his name have been sent to my constituents, that he regularly campaigns and goes to events in my constituency without letting me know, that he undertakes casework for my constituents, all of which is against parliamentary rules. He describes himself as 'MP for Reading' – look at the plaque on the Café Alba in the Oracle. He has passed off a constituent of mine as his constituent in the House and in the media. Do you want more?"

Oh all right. "Councillor Salter – as he still likes to think he is – described me in Friday's *Evening Standard* as a 'swivel-eyed bunny boiler'," Griffiths continues. "Charming – but not big and not clever."

No doubt she would say the same about a verdict given to the *Eye* by another of her colleagues: "Mad. As mad as the Chief Hatter at the Bonkersville Tea Party. Her speciality was to go around accusing people of undermining her, which had the obvious effect that even if people hadn't got anything against her before that point, they did then." When the time came for her reselection, this eccentric vote-winning tactic yielded the inevitable result.

THE FALL-OUT continues following London mayor Ken Livingstone's announcement that, had he been a member of the RMT rail union, "for the first time in my life, I would cross a picket line".

A furious Bob Crow demanded to see Leninspart at City Hall, particularly since the RMT had been one of the biggest backers of Ken's original bid to become mayor. By the time Millwall supporting Crow had reached Leninspart's office, he had clamed down and was prepared to hold out an olive branch – providing Livingstone demonstrated some contrition.

Crow had been assured by Leninspart's advisers that it had all been "a terrible mistake" and that "we all told Ken it was a big error". Sadly for Crow, Leninspart was in no mood to apologise and instead exploded, calling Crow and the RMT "a bunch of gangsters!"

Crow has now gone ballistic, storming out of Livingstone's Transport for London and demanding an apology. He is also telling Leninspart's allies in parliament that Ken must be sent to Coventry for breaking the "eleventh commandment – thou shalt not cross a picket line".

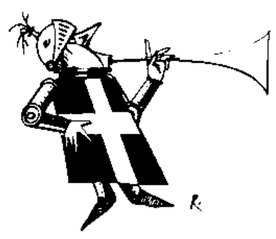
Warballs

"IT'S more sonic and more layered. The post-9/11 world of censorship and oppression demanded more aggressive guitars." — Jesse Malin on his new album, *Uncut* magazine.

"A Texas jury on Monday found a British streaker guilty of criminal trespassing for racing on to the field during the Super Bowl in February with only a thong and a smile… Prosecutor Kristin Gurney argued that Roberts's antics could not be tolerated in post-11 September America. 'As light-hearted about this as I'd like to be, we don't live in a society any more where we can excuse this kind of behaviour,' she told the jury." — Reuters.

"The Container Store's vice president of marketing, Casey Priest, says it's no coincidence that sales have been strong since 9/11. 'Our customers want to get control,' says Priest. 'And when they can't control the world around them, they turn to the things they can control,' like sorting their sock drawer." — *Newsweek*.

EYE TOLD YOU SO



HOME office mandarins have at last told ministers that any hasty launch of the new National Offender Management Service (Noms) is doomed – just as the *Eye* has predicted.

Last month's launch of the merged prison and probation services had already been postponed to the autumn. Now the *Eye* learns that the proposed structure for the new empire to be run by former prisons chief Martin Narey – with its ludicrously-named directors of public sector interventions (Dipsi) and regional offenders managers (Roms) and "interventions staff" – has been torn up. With Noms back on the drawing board, a formal launch is not expected until June next year.

Senior civil servants have warned ministers not to try to undertake such a massive reorganisation at the same time as bringing in a new raft of criminal penalties in the 2003 criminal justice act. With the introduction of "custody plus" and "custody minus" providing a mixture of jail and supervision in the community, as well as changes to the way suspended and long-term jail sentences are served, the new act itself provides one of the biggest shake-ups in the criminal justice system for decades. Just implementing these changes requires an extra 4,700 probation staff; and there's no indication from the home office and treasury that recruitment is underway.

To add to the potential chaos, magistrates' and crown courts are due to be brought together at the beginning of 2005 under the department for constitutional affairs.

Curiously home office minister Paul Goggins and Martin Narey both pulled out at the last minute from a London conference last week focusing on Noms. Naturally their non-appearance was entirely unrelated to the embarrassment that is Noms.

THE GONG SHOW

CONGRATULATIONS to Eithne Wallis, former director-general of the probation service and director for change at the ill-fated National Offender Management Service (Noms), who has recently been made a Companion of the Order of the Bath.

Wallis presided over the probation service's costly IT fiasco, a £20m budget overspend and a huge expansion in bureaucracy which saw staff at the national probation directorate rise from 90 to 460 while there were complaints about shortages in frontline officers (see *Eyes passim*).

Meanwhile Jonathan Tross, outgoing chief executive of the troubled Cafcass, the children and family court service, also got a CB and was praised for "improved efficiency". While children's guardians and Napo, the family court union, say the backlog of cases has reduced, along with the numbers ending up before the courts, the children are still out there and to be found in a different statistical pile.

TELEPHONE TALES

THANKS to new laws businesses can now block cold-calling from telesales companies, with the threat of a £5,000 fine for callers who breach the ban.

Like members of the public who were fed up being pestered with unsolicited calls, companies can now register their phone numbers on an opt-out list.

Interestingly, the five-year contract to run and maintain the new business register has been awarded to the Direct Marketing Association, the industry's trade organisation which has also been running the Telephone Preference Service register for private phone users.

Is this the same Direct Marketing Association which once tried to block the legislation, claiming it would be an "intolerable restriction" on business? And could it be the same DMA that will now charge businesses fees of up to £7,500 a year to regularly access the register? It could.

Legal News

***EYE* 1107 reported on the problems of solicitor Yvonne Hossack, whose Northamptonshire-based law firm specialises in fighting the closure of old folks' homes up and down the country.**

Hossack's practice itself faces closure after the legal services commission (LSC), the body which oversees legal aid, earlier this year refused to fund any cases outside Hossack's home area of the east Midlands. If care home closures elsewhere proceed unchallenged, she says, many elderly people's lives will be shortened, for the mortality rate for oldies moved against their will is double that of those allowed to stay put in their final years.

After obtaining internal LSC emails which described her as "inept" and "eccentric… rampaging about", Hossack was convinced that LSC staff were mounting a vindictive personal campaign against her. This impression was confirmed on 23 June when, at a ceremony for the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards, presented by Cherie Booth at the Commonwealth Club, Hossack, who had been nominated for an award, overheard an LSC employee boasting that the *Eye* had printed a "retraction" of the article in issue 1107.

This wasn't true, but in *Eye* 1109 we did run a letter from Clare Dodgson, chief executive of the LSC. It was nonsense to suggest that very few law firms apart from Hossacks were challenging residential home closures, said Dodgyson. "We are now funding an increased number of 79 law firms and not-for-profit agencies specialising in cases of this nature… [Ms Hossack] cannot expect us to pay for additional travel costs if there is a specialist solicitor nearer who is able to take on the case."

Hossack's case all along has been that there are indeed many law firms capable of taking on such cases – but the point is that they don't, as Dodgson knows perfectly well. Dodgyson's slippery use of language and refusal to engage with the real issues raised by our story enraged many readers with elderly relatives and those who campaign for oldies. A selection of the dozens of letters and emails we received appears on the Letters page.

RED faces at Merseyside Probation Service, which managed to recruit a new solicitor to deal with its backlog of legal files only to discover that the man was himself a tagged offender and, er, one of their own clients.

A member of staff spotted that the new man had the same name as a client she was seeing twice a week following his release from prison. She checked the details and, lo and behold, it was the same chap who had been sent down for multiple driving offences. Oh, and he wasn't a qualified solicitor either.

The fake solicitor, who had been employed through an agency, has now been sent back to jail for making a false declaration.

GORDON BROWN LOSES ADVISER

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

BEFORE he could even cross the Channel to denounce the graft and corruption endemic in Brussels, one of UKIP's new MEPs has run into trouble back home.

The day after his election to the European parliament, Ashley Mote appeared at Chichester crown court charged with nine counts of fraud. The case, which concerns alleged housing benefit fraud from a number of years ago, will be heard in full in November.

Mote says the charges are a smear against him and his party – but it's a pity it seems to have slipped his mind to tell his party leaders that he was facing such accusations. All UKIP candidates were supposed to inform the party before the Euro elections about any potential embarrassments – however fanciful. This was to ensure that UKIP would not be linked to any member's support for neo-fascist organisations. Mote has no such links.

AS the *Eye* went to press the centre-right grouping in the European parliament to which Britain's Conservatives are aligned, the European People's Party (EPP), was holding its post-election beano/study week in Budapest where the group's federalist members from France were expected to announce their departure..

To make up the numbers (and ensure plum posts in the new parliament), the EPP has been in negotiations with the Italian post-fascist Allianca National (AN), led by Italian government minister Gianofranco Fini. The AN is the spiritual heir of Mussolini and has some extreme views on a range of subjects. One of its ministers recently suggested that a new immigration policy for Italy would involve blowing refugee vessels in the Adriatic out of the water.

All this creates problems for the Tory group, whose leader Jonathan Evans declared categorically that he would "never" allow the Tories to be part of the same group as the AN. So either the Tories will find themselves homeless and friendless in the new parliament (it's too late to form a new group) or they'll have to get into bed with some unsavoury Italians.

***EYE* 1108 linked the fate of Dougal Watt, sacked former official at the European court of auditors, with that of Paul van Buitenen, the former Euro-official who exposed widespread corruption and nepotism in the European Union.**

As we reported, van Buitenen set up his own political party, Transparent Europe, in an attempt to get support for the further exposure of European institutions. In elections to the parliament, Van Buitenen's party got 7 percent of the vote and provided two of Holland's 27 MEPs.

One of his first acts on being elected was to send an email to the Commons public accounts committee (PAC) here in Britain and to which Dougal Watt has started outlining a long string of allegations about EU corruption. "I am," wrote van Buitenen, "following with interest Mr Watt's investigations and hope the PAC will treat these with the seriousness they deserve."

This will come as a shock to the committee which has been inclined up to now to ignore Mr Watt's allegations completely.

PS: The European parliament's gymnasium has just had a sun bed installed, presumably in readiness for UKIP star Robert Kilroy-Silk, who has denied that he will quickly dispose of his seat (see *Eye* 1108).

ROYAL NEWS

MORE news emerges of the financial acumen of the British royal family.

A few years ago Prince Andrew created Killy Associates to collect royalties and other payments for publication of his photographs. The Duke of York was kind enough to pledge any profits to charity; but after two years' trading the grand total contributed to good causes is precisely, er, zilch.

No doubt the well-meaning Andrew has been taking lessons in commerce from his brother Edward (of Ardent "no-productions" fame).

ETV

Johnny & Denise — Passport To Paradise (BBC1)

The New Shock Of The New (BBC2)

ALTHOUGH television pretends to be modern and forward-looking, it's a medium crippled by nostalgia. Paralysed by the secret fear that it really was all better in the 60s and 70s, the current breed of executives fill the schedule with re-formattings and updates. Regrettably, the huge success of one retro-show *Strictly Come Dancing* – will only encourage them.

Last Saturday night, for example, saw two more programmes looking back over their shoulder. **Johnny & Denise – Passport To Paradise** is another attempt to revive Saturday night variety shows. As this column pointed out when ITV1 tried something similar with Ant & Dec, Saturday night is no longer a peak viewing period (the energy has shifted to Sunday and Friday) but the pressure of past glories persuades controllers of mainstream channels to chase another *Noel's House Party* or *Generation Game*.

Johnny & Denise makes all the usual mistakes. For a start, it announces that Johnny Vaughan and Denise Van Outen are "reunited especially for you". This is typical media-village silliness because the presentational couple's fame came from their stint on Channel 4's *Big Breakfast*, where audiences were perhaps a tenth of what a Saturday night special needs to pull in. Most of the peak-time BBC1 audience would have no idea who Johnny & Denise are. His BBC3 talk-show failed horribly and his main profile now is as a London radio host.

The format they've been given consists of desperate references to almost any show which has ever prospered in this slot. There's a lookalike comp (*Stars In Their Eyes*), various ambush-formats in which audience-members are set up (*Noel's House Party*), sections where the audience send in embarrassing pictures (*You've Been Framed*). Most astonishingly, the show begins and ends with Johnny, who can barely hold a note, duetting with Denise on a big number (*Morecambe & Wise*, *The Mike Yarwood Show*.)

"Here comes the bit from the advert"

The most dangerous piece of sampling, though, was a live link-up to Portugal with Ian "Wrighty" Wright. The pretext was a competition prize of tickets for the Euro 2004 final, which the former footballer was covering, but viewers were mainly reminded that Wrighty has presided over at least two failed formats in the BBC1 Saturday night slot.

The need for frequent disclaimers – "Do make sure that the person in the photo has agreed to you sending it in" – indicate the increasing legal restraints on ambush-format programmes. You can already anticipate problems with the sequences in which hidden cameras film unknowing people at a public event.

There are flashes in which Vaughan shows his quick wits as a live broadcaster but his professionalism feels pointless when applied to such a dead genre. Why can't television just accept that Saturday night variety shows are something they had back then, like Ted Heath and space hoppers?

Another of television's retro tendencies is the update on a previously successful programme. For quarter of a century now, Robert Hughes's *The Shock Of The New*, an eight-parter about modern art, has been used as the benchmark against which the decline of arts television has been measured.

Now they've had the wheeze of **The New Shock Of The New**, in which the Australian critic catches up with Damien, Tracy and the rest of the gang. It's a terrible idea. A programme which is trying to depict the steady decline of modern art in fact becomes a portrait of the falling-off in Robert Hughes and television.

The whole point of *The Shock Of The New* was that it offered a sympathetic engagement with modern art which had previously been restricted to old masters. But Hughes, battered by age and a car accident, has moved to the right, as old men usually do, and now prefers Goya, Picasso and Turner to the stuff that hangs on white-painted walls. Perhaps that mental travel is inevitable; but it has led to just another piece, its text almost inseparable from Hughes's recent Royal Academy lecture, attacking modernity, for which they could have got Brian Sewell.

And, where the original was a lavish eight-parter, what you get now is a rushed one-off, its budgetary restraints apparent in the lantern-lecture format. It reminds you that, 25 years ago, the BBC could commission a huge series from a critic little known beyond the cognoscenti. But now this lame sequel could only be made because Robert Hughes had made a series before.

'Remote Controller'

GOING LIVE

POOR Jackie Beltrao of Sky News didn't get much change from Maria Sharapova on Ladies' final day at Wimbledon.

"Yes indeed, Sharapova is coming out of Gate 5 now," Beltrao told expectant viewers. "Will she speak to us? Let's see… No, she's going the other way."

Pity BBC South's Stuart Norval too as he reported live from a pub full of England fans during Euro 2004. "The fans are really in good voice tonight," said Norval, who was wearing a silly England hat.

Sadly for viewers his report was then drowned out by a loud chorus of: "Who's the wanker, who's the wanker, who's the wanker in the hat?" It was brought to a close by a merciful "back to the studio".

MEDIA NEWS

SO HOW sweeping is the BBC's proposed "series of sweeping changes"? *Very* sweeping, claims the Beeb, cap in hand for charter renewal.

In fact a promise to restore news and current affairs to its "proper place" turns out to be little more than a hint that *Panorama* might return to the prime time slot it had for decades.

Then there's the promise to remove from the schedules "derivative" programmes designed to win ratings. Their slots will be filled by programmes that are, er, "well made" instead. According to Auntie, this means more series like *Spooks*, which may be well made but is hardly new. In fact *Spooks* is little more than a "tooled up" soap opera and was designed by the BBC from the start to be a ratings banker.

Elsewhere new director-general Mark Thompson promises that BBC's journalism will be "at the forefront of global news". According to the Beeb, that means a promise to retain "the *Ten O'Clock News*, as presented by Fiona Bruce" in its current slot.

DUMB BRITAIN

DUMB ANIMALS SPECIAL

Steve Wright Show, Radio 2

Wright: What is a female sheep called?

Contestant: Er... er... a goat.

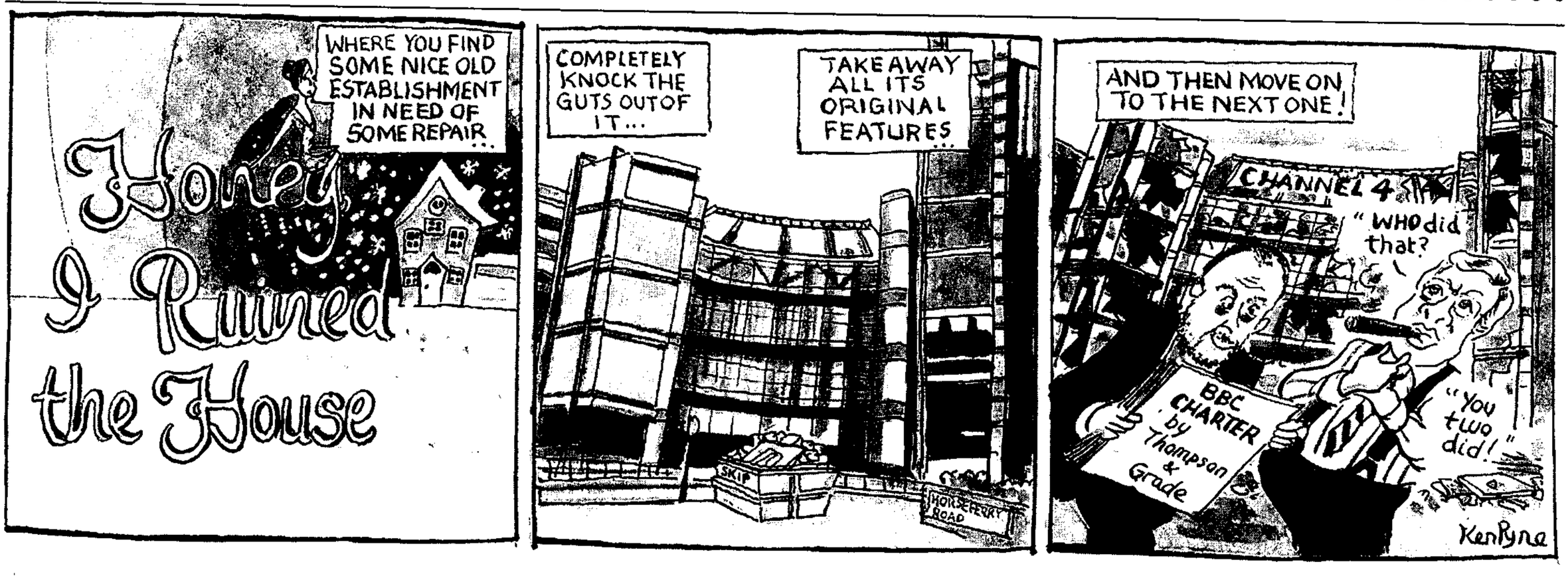
Wright: The adjective "porcine" refers to which animal?

Contestant: Porcupine.

The Vault, ITV

Melanie Sykes: What was the name of the parrot in the novel Treasure Island?

Contestant: Long John Silver.


Honey I Ruined the House
WHERE YOU FIND SOME NICE OLD ESTABLISHMENT IN NEED OF SOME REPAIR...
COMPLETELY KNOCK THE GUTS OUT OF IT...
TAKE AWAY ALL ITS ORIGINAL FEATURES...
SKIP
HORSEFERRY ROAD
AND THEN MOVE ON TO THE NEXT ONE!
CHANNEL 4
"WHO did that?
BBC CHARTER by Thompson & Grade
"You two did!"
KenRyne

AT THE heart of the BBC's manifesto for charter renewal is the real promise of another huge tier of management.

Each BBC channel will be given a service licence setting out its budget, remit and performance targets. If the BBC governors decide these have not been met, the licence will be refused.

Realising that the governors knows absolutely nothing about broadcasting, BBC chairman Michael Grade and Mark Thompson will create a "governance unit", made up of people who do, to supply enough "support and independent advice" to avoid egg on governors' faces and to keep the culture secretary happy.

A BBC hack has complained to *Ariel* about the mounds of pointless circulars distributed throughout the corporation. "They're expensive, glossy and a waste of paper because they all end up in the bin."

One recent "straight-to-skip" offering was a picture of David Beckham and a Euro 2004 timetable. "The postcards were sent out as a way of informing staff about the tournament," said a marketing manager apparently in the belief that some BBC staff weren't aware of the footie.

HOW heartening to learn that in the post-Dyke, post-Hutton, post-Neil BBC, good old Birtism is alive and well.

Some crap may have been cut but there are still scores of middle and lowly managers on courses designed to train BBC journalists how to behave in an imaginary real business world.

Right now the course all managers are being forced to attend is training for staff assessment – learning how they're meant to tell their staff they're useless but, not to worry, they won't be sacked.

It is forbidden not to take this endless attitude training seriously, however, although many senior managers are walking out of enforced day-long courses. One junior manager being trained to manage "disappointment for secretaries", was told last week that the word "brainstorm" was no longer allowed.

"Why?" she asked.

"Because it is offensive to those suffering from epilepsy," the course facilitator proffered.

"And what term should be used instead?" The answer was "thoughtshower".

T-SKY

"LITTLE BRITAIN, BBC7, 11.30pm. Living in a house where *Little Britain* catchphrases abound, I would love to be able to enjoy these repeats of the second radio series with my children. But they are on too late... sounds like a job for my newfangled Sky Plus recording device then."

—Chris Campling on the joys of Sky Plus (prop R Murdoch), Radio listings, the Times (prop R Murdoch), 29 June 2004.

CRITICS IN CON-TEXT

"THE King of West End Musicals – Evening Standard" is the boast on press ads for *Jailhouse Rock: The Musical* at London's Piccadilly Theatre.

But what the paper actually said, in a report about the celebrities who attended the show's opening night, was that it "looks set to become the king of West End musicals... if the reaction of boy band Blue, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and ex-EastEnder Tamzin Outhwaite are anything to go by. Critical reception was slightly less enthusiastic – the Evening Standard's Nick Curtis thought the show was 'slightly tacky.'"

This was something of an understatement. In his accompanying review in the same edition of the paper, Curtis described the show as a "prison sentence with no appeal", "a hound dog's dinner," and "a mess that even diehard Elvis fans will strain to love".

AD NAUSEAM

EURO 2004 has been a marketing beanfeast for the world's sportswear manufacturers... with a couple of notable exceptions.

The Italian company Diadora has been running a European ad with the strapline "the world needs to play more", including one scene where the commentary says: "Better 90 minutes of play than one minute of violence." Unfortunately for Diadora the "violent" imagery in the background is in fact footage of the 1985 Bradford stadium disaster, in which 56 people died.

When appalled relatives complained Diadora was suitably contrite. It claims it requested stock images of "non-accidental violence" as opposed to horrific tragedy, and the ad is now being re-edited.

In a conciliatory gesture almost as ham-fisted as the ad itself, Diadora has offered to be the club's sponsor next year. As Bradford City is on the brink of closure, this may turn out to be cheaper than expected.

"BY INVITING consumers to get closer to their world-class football talents and taste stardom, Pepsi is again showing its dedication in providing unique football experiences and adding excitement to consumers' daily lives," reads the promotional bullshit on Pepsi's website describing its latest Euro 2004 TV commercial.

Alas, the world-class football talent featured in the "Gladiator" ad left a sour taste in the mouth during the tournament itself. Top "brand warrior" David Beckham turned in a largely inept performance which was capped by two crucial penalty misses. And of the others featured, Francesco Totti lasted just one game, after spitting in an opponent's face, while Spanish strikers Raul and Torres were both hugely ineffectual. With neither able to make the score-sheet, Spain joined Totti's Italy in an ignominious early exit. Coke anyone?

THERE was equally sad news for American Express which had signed up tennis players Andre Agassi and Venus Williams to appear in a series of high-profile ads during Wimbledon.

Williams didn't get beyond the second round, while for Agassi it was not so much a case of "never leave home without it" as of never leave home full stop. Injury meant he didn't make it to Wimbledon at all.

STAFF at Abbott Mead Vickers, Britain's largest ad shop, are made aware at every level from graduate recruitment to the boardroom that theirs is an agency permanently camped on the moral high ground.

Clients are also told of the agency's exquisite probity – AMV has a long tradition of anti-smoking work and does not advertise to children, rejecting toy accounts and the like.

All of which has left some staff confused in the light of the health select committee's report on obesity. It heavily criticised a Wotsits ad and

"There now, last night Daddy was visited by the Stupid Trouser Fairy"

requested details of the planning process that had led to it. The ad was made by AMV, whose documents revealed that targeting children to "pester" their parents had been a specific aim of the advert.

THE same HSC report has caused furious back-pedalling by the fast food giants desperate to avoid an advertising ban.

Burger King is launching a Premium Tastes range; the "new" McDonald's menu has already been widely-publicised; and come August we can look forward to an educational ad campaign in which Ronald McDonald himself will encourage children to take more exercise.

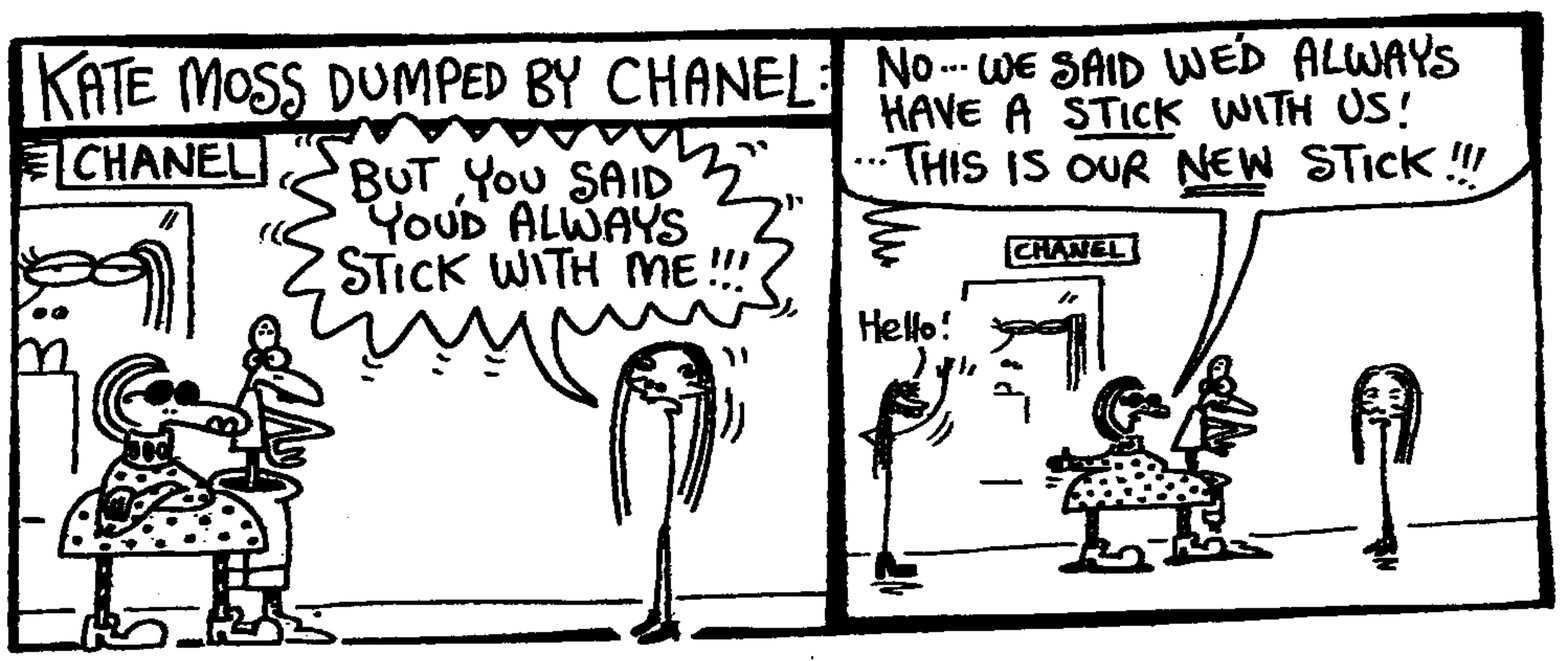
McDonald's commitment to the nation's health is admirable. The campaign cost £1m, which seems like a lot – until you realise that McDonald's advertising spend in 2003 was more than £50m. So that's 2 percent of its budget given to combating obesity while the rest helps to create it.

Burger King is also encouraging children to get out more, with a new promotion giving away children's cinema tickets with every kid's meal. A sack of junk food and then two hours in an armchair. The battle against childhood obesity has truly begun!

THE Cannes advertising awards have offered a salutary reminder of how advertising works, or doesn't.

The shortlists included two UK TV ads that were among the most complained about last year, including one that showed a realistic childbirth in a nativity play in a bid to sell Kipling's cakes. Even though this ad was taken off air amid a barrage of criticism, adland still thinks it's rather clever. The fact that Kipling has now dropped Saatchi & Saatchi, who produced the brilliant/offensive ad, suggests it did little for the product and little for the sorry consumer but kept lots of people in sharp suits most amused.

SUPERMODELS


KATE MOSS DUMPED BY CHANEL:
CHANEL
"BUT YOU SAID YOU'D ALWAYS STICK WITH ME!!!"
NO... WE SAID WE'D ALWAYS HAVE A STICK WITH US! ...THIS IS OUR NEW STICK!!!
CHANEL
Hello!

DOING THE ROUNDS

IF EVER more evidence were needed to depoliticise the health service, the standard of the recent Commons "debates" between Michael Howard and Tony Blair provided it.

Howard tried the embarrassing con of damning the entire NHS on the basis of a single anecdote, made the more pitiful by its lack of veracity. His constituent won't have to wait 20 months for post-operative radiotherapy in Kent, but 20 weeks. When the error was unearthed the triumphal gloating of Blair and health secretary John Reid suggested they'd never had to wait 20 weeks for anything. They also have short memories. It was a similar anecdotal gaffe by Labour over a girl's grommets that helped lose the election in 1992.

But Blair too has been guilty of deception. In one exchange he damned the Tory health passport for "taking money out of the NHS and into the private sector." However, he failed to mention that all his new private finance initiative (PFI) building projects do precisely that, as do the contracts "new" Labour has struck with private hospitals and treatment centres which can cherry pick lucrative elective surgery (cataracts, joint replacements, hernias, etc) and leave the NHS to soak up all the patients unfortunate enough not to have a disease with a profit margin.

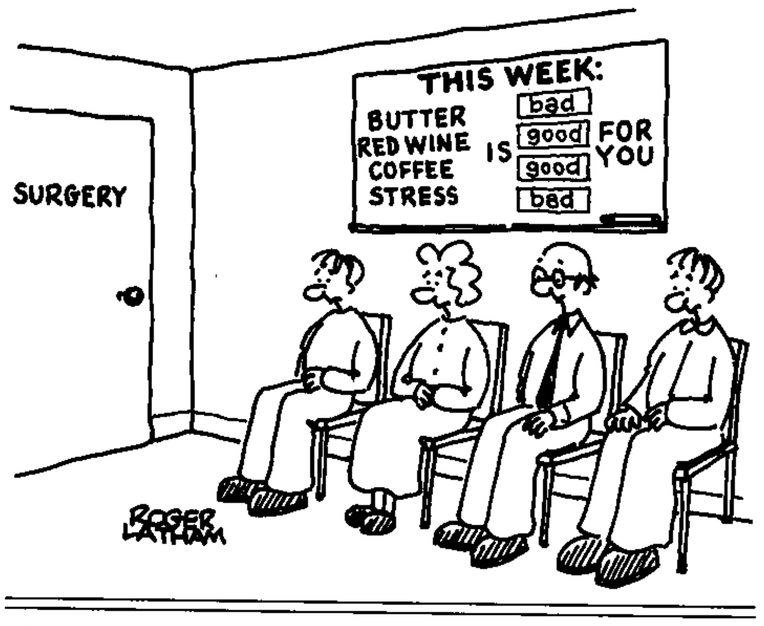
Some of this private work will be done by overseas surgeons flown in after some sort of check on their competence. This is nothing new (visiting Australian surgeons have long defined POM as "practice on me"); but much of the cutting will be done by those already working for the NHS who will have to abandon their hospitals to operate elsewhere. The solution, according to Professor Robert "Call me Lord" Winston, is to "bring private practice back into the NHS" so it is the NHS which profits from NHS patients treated privately. And consultants don't have to waste time travelling between different "provider units".

Another key weakness of breaking up the surgery is the effect it will have on training. In the last *Eye*, M.D. exposed the fact that new consultants have alarmingly little experience, prompting this response from the chairman of a higher surgical training scheme: "If anything, the situation is even worse than you have written. I do not support any return to the dismal past with ridiculous hours and years of training, but what is happening is now dangerous.

"The Government is desperate to reduce waiting lists and it now seems will appoint anyone to a post. The DoH has published a 'new consultant entry scheme' whereby you can appoint short-term consultants by-passing all the usual procedures – this seems to cover between now and the election!

"By use of logbooks we have seen the experience levels of our registrars fall at an alarming rate. We have yet to analyse what will happen when they are all on shift work; but it seems certain that it will get even worse. I have severe doubts whether I wish to continue to be in the position of 'signing off' trainees as fully trained and capable of independent practice following this dumbed-down training. What seems unbelievable is that every surgeon involved in training at hospital level is fully aware of this but there is hardly a squeak from our leaders in the royal colleges who are meant to maintain standards."

The incessant emphasis of Labour's reforms on waiting lists is also creating problems elsewhere. Most of the work of the NHS is done in the community and primary care; yet this area receives much less attention and funding. There is an admirable section of the government's five-year plan devoted to chronic illnesses, but this was



almost immediately undone by John Reid's pledge that no one will have to wait more than 18 weeks for surgery from their initial GP consultation. The figure is clearly politically engineered for a pre-election comparison with the old Tory target of 18 months, but the pressure to hit the new target will mean that even more resources will be forced out of the community back into hospitals.

The running down of chronic care in the NHS has created a market imbalance which Simon Stevens is helping redress. As Blair's senior health policy adviser, he pioneered an American model of caring for older vulnerable patients in the community, which has the added benefit of freeing up hospital beds for waiting list work. Nine primary care trusts are currently piloting the "Evercare" model designed by the private United Health Group, and if it's successful another huge slice of public money will exit the NHS for the private sector. Not that it should worry Stevens much. He is now a vice-president of UHG, with a brief to expand its European business.

M.D.

SIGNAL FAILURES

Stand and deliver £250m

WHATEVER the "strategic" rail authority's fate in the government's rail shake-up, due to be announced this month, nobody can deny the SRA's success in one of its key tasks: helping to save Stagecoach plc for the nation.

Stagecoach was in dire straits when Richard Bowker left his job as co-chairman of Virgin Rail (half owned by Stagecoach) to become SRA chairman. Stagecoach had disastrously paid £1.2bn for an assortment of American bus and taxi operations. At home, Virgin Rail was heading for staggering losses because it couldn't deliver the services and payments to the state it promised in its original business plans (*Eyes passim*). Fortunately Bowker discovered a stash of spare millions of pounds at the SRA – just the thing to shore up Virgin Rail. There was even some left over for him to increase subsidy to Stagecoach's South West Trains by 400 percent last year, as part of a scaled-down franchise deal.

By April 2004 Stagecoach had accrued a £250m pile of surplus cash, attributed to unexpectedly strong profits (up 15.4 percent) at Virgin Rail and SWT. But instead of selfishly investing that money in SWT – perhaps in the 100-plus new carriages originally promised but now abandoned – Stagecoach will generously give the cash to its needy shareholders.

Among them is Brian Souter, founder of Stagecoach. The previous year he drew a salary of £800,000 – up 72 percent – after Stagecoach made a £466m loss, leading the *Eye* (1089) to ponder: "What will Souter bank this year, now Stagecoach has been assured a brighter future by the SRA?" The answer is that he and his sister stand to share £65m of the £250m windfall (excluding Souter's salary).

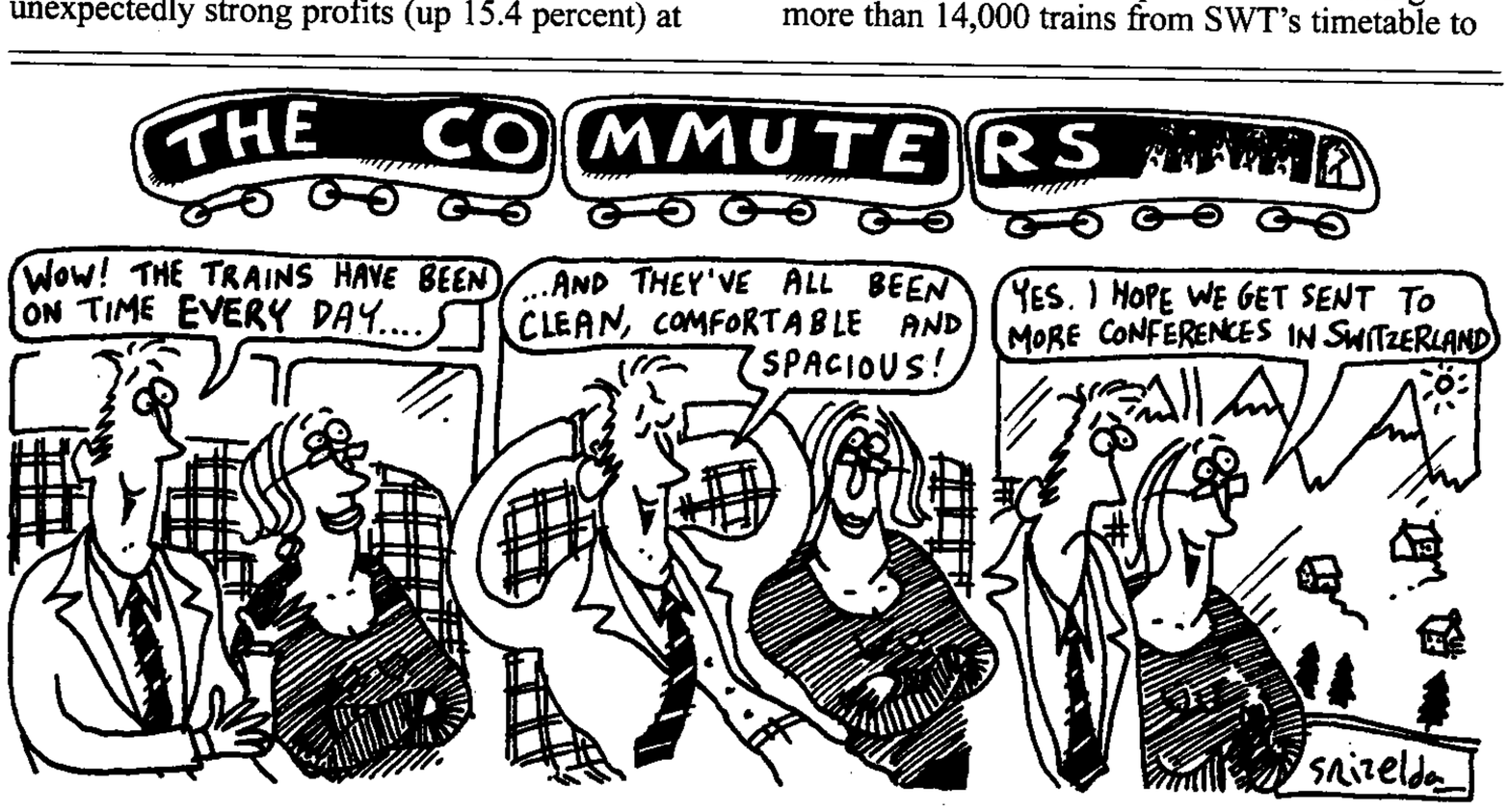
In August 2002 Richard Branson responded to complaints about the SRA's Virgin handout by promising: "Not a penny will be taken out by individuals or shareholders." He was referring to the 2002-3 handout, and Stagecoach's unexpectedly strong rail profits follow the SRA's 2003-4 handout. So that's all right then.

Announcing its annual results on 23 June, Stagecoach boasted of "significant improvement in South West Trains' operational performance". Two days later the SRA published statistics showing the "significant improvement" was a 7.5 percent *increase* in trains cancelled and a 2 percent gain in punctuality. That was despite the SRA cutting more than 14,000 trains from SWT's timetable to improve performance.

Souter had no qualms about telling investors in his official AGM statement: "In rail, we have significantly out-performed last year by controlling costs, improving operational performance and investing in new trains." In fact Stagecoach and Virgin are leasing new trains, not investing in them (there's a big difference in financial terms) and Souter's cost control shows up in the SRA statistics as a massive 215 percent rise in SWT's subsidy per passenger kilometre in 2003-4, plus an 85 percent rise at Virgin West Coast and a 15 percent rise at Virgin Cross-Country.

After Bowker's sterling work at the SRA, the least Branson and Souter could do is offer him another job when he leaves his present post.

● WHEN a commuter who regularly travels from Bookham to London Bridge asked Southern Trains for a timetable, she was amazed to be told her train did not exist. She was sent a timetable that didn't show the route; and when she phoned Southern Trains denied the train existed before eventually reading out a timetable. A letter then arrived soon afterwards saying Southern Trains "do not run a service to Bookham". The baffled commuter still takes the phantom service.


THE COMMUTERS
WOW! THE TRAINS HAVE BEEN ON TIME EVERY DAY....
...AND THEY'VE ALL BEEN CLEAN, COMFORTABLE AND SPACIOUS!
YES. I HOPE WE GET SENT TO MORE CONFERENCES IN SWITZERLAND
Srizelda

● VIRGIN Trains has dumped a 14-year-old schoolgirl on a railway platform miles from home after a mix-up over her ticket.

Elizabeth Brown was ejected from an intercity train at Darlington despite pleas that her ticket, which was printed in an unusual format, was valid. Her father Stuart had collected it in person from his station in Hexham and posted it to Elizabeth in Sheffield so she could visit for the weekend. He was waiting for her at Newcastle.

"I called British Transport Police who went and found her and opened up a small office so she had somewhere safe to wait," said Mr Brown, who had checked with Virgin Trains about minors travelling alone. "They said it would be fine... Then she was ejected from the train in the middle of nowhere. She was terrified."

A spokesman for Virgin Trains said: "It does give us cause for concern."

'Dr B. Ching'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

BULLY FOR YOU

THE staunchest defender of suspended Humberside chief constable David Westwood was the chairman of his police authority, Hull city council leader Colin Inglis, who defied home secretary David Blunkett's demands for Westwood's head until over-ruled by the High Court last week.

Westwood came in for severe criticism in the Bichard report on how Humberside Knacker destroyed intelligence records which could have prevented Soham killer Ian Huntley getting a job in a school.

Speaking on TV last week Inglis said of Blunkett: "If you give in to bullies, they always come back for more." Well, Inglis would know. In May 2002 an audit commission report concluded that Hull city council was one of the worst run in the country, with a culture of bullying, intimidation and financial mismanagement. It had frittered away a £260m windfall from the part-sale of its own telephone company, Kingston Communications, in less than three years.

Labour lost control shortly afterwards. During a year-long Lib Dem interregnum, Labour leader Inglis accused the council's chief executive, Jim Brooks, of having leaked the audit commission's findings to the Lib Dems. He told Brooks he'd be out of a job if Labour regained control.

This earned him a bollocking from Sir Jeremy Beecham, head of the local government association. But as soon as Labour got back in, in June last year, Brooks was suspended and escorted from the building. Five months later he took "early retirement" and a £260,000 payoff – peanuts to a council which had recently poured 1,000 times that down the drain. Meanwhile the search continues for anyone daft enough to want to be Hull's chief exec, and the city is currently being run by a government "hit squad".

MAHFOOZ WHO?

JUNE 10 was a bad day for democracy in Blackburn. After the all-postal vote was counted, Labour had 33 seats, the Tories had 17, the Lib-Dems 11 and there was one independent, giving Labour an overall majority of four on the borough council. A clear result, it seemed.

Yet just days later Labour's majority had been overturned, leaving the party outnumbered by 35 seats to 27. On 15 June six Asian Labour councillors broke away and formed their own "independent" group which, finding itself holding the balance of power, began negotiations about forming an alliance to run the council with the Tories and Lib Dems.

The defections are believed to be not unrelated to the fact that the leader of the dissidents, Cllr Mahfooz Hussain, had been informed that he was to be deprived of his position as executive member for education – and its allowance of £6,107. Although rated overall as an "excellent" council, there are concerns about the performance of some of Blackburn's schools, with two taken into special measures during Hussain's tenure.

After a fortnight of wrangling in which it appeared that the six might not, after all, be rewarded with cushy numbers by the new regime, they did another about-turn. Five of the six declared they would vote with Labour after all, thus enabling the people's party to take control once more.

The contempt for democracy displayed by the six has caused dismay among those working to improve community relations in Blackburn. Former Labour election agent Mike Madigan told the *Eye*: "Many in the indigenous community now unfairly view all Muslim councillors with suspicion. It's creating a breeding ground for the BNP to come in."

Madigan refused to act as an agent this year because he was unhappy with the way Mahfooz Hussain and two other defectors, Iftakhar Hussain and Parwaiz Akhtar, had been selected for the Bastwell ward. Akhtar had been a member of the Lib Dems until shortly before the election but changed sides when a vacancy for a Labour candidate came up. Mr Madigan said all-postal voting was a mistake in towns like Blackburn.

"Hundreds of votes are controlled by the heads of extended Asian families," he said. "If you raise the subject you are accused of racism. But people are so angry that these matters must be discussed in the open."

A WOMAN'S PLACE

WOMEN, although still in a minority in politics, are much better represented than they used to be. But not in the Labour-run London borough of Tower Hamlets, where there are now only nine female councillors out of 51.

Ten years ago there were 16. Only one woman sits on the council's cabinet. Even this meagre representation seems to bother some of the male councillors. Last month, at the inauguration ceremony for new mayor Manir Ahmed, a segregated room was set aside for women and children only. Mumtaz Samad, Tower Hamlets' only female Asian councillor, who has complained of harassment and bullying by male colleagues, said she understood segregation might be appropriate in a mosque, "but not at a civic event in the 21st century".

One ex-councillor, Juzna Begum, a 32-year-old barrister, left politics because of her treatment by male Bangladeshi Labour members: "Labour party members spread a rumour that I had a white boyfriend and said it wouldn't go down well with the elderly Bengalis." At the 2002 elections "members were being told that I should not be standing, that a Muslim Bangladeshi woman is not supposed to be involved in politics".

The campaign drove Juzna Begum out of politics. She claims a Labour Party "investigation" came to nothing. Now, where have we heard that before?

DEADLY DUO

PISSPOOR record checking, inaccurate billing, unnecessary court action and unwarranted threats from bailiffs… Yes, our old friends at Crapita are still in business!

When Lambeth resident Maryanne Lacriade told Lambeth council she was moving out of the borough last September and would no longer be liable for council tax, she was asked for independent proof. This was unusual but she duly produced a solicitor's letter confirming the completion date of her new house purchase.

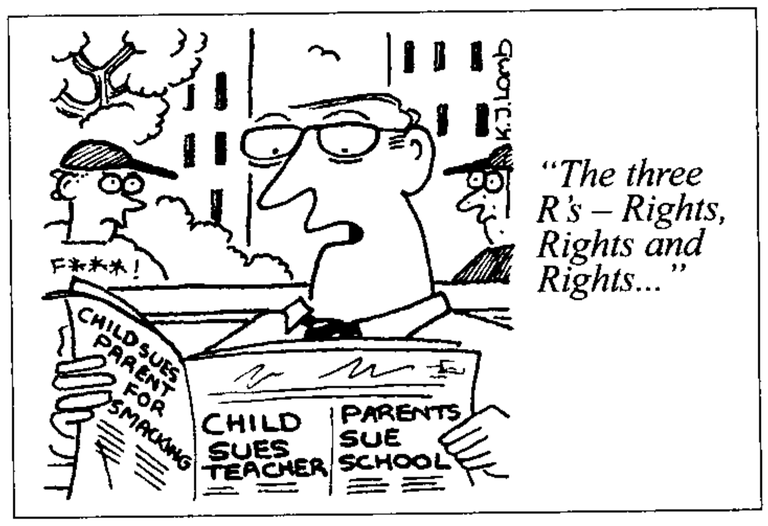
Alas, this was not the end of her relationship with the London borough but the start of nine months of increasing anxiety and stress as Lambeth, whose council tax is collected by Capita Business Services, pursued her for tax she did not owe. First came the red demands, then a court summons to Camberwell Green magistrates' court – and finally letters and phone calls from Equita Certificated Bailiffs, who threatened jail proceedings and confiscation of her furniture.

Even though Crapita was corresponding with Mrs Lacriade at her new address (which might have been a bit of a clue) and even though, as requested, she had also supplied her new Croydon rates bill and a case worker had clearly indicated in writing that the Lambeth account should be closed, it wasn't.

Lambeth continued to bill Mrs Lacriade during 2004 claiming well over £1,000. In May Lambeth council secured a magistrates' liability order against her for £1,018 plus £85 costs.

Mrs Lacriade said: "The council were repeatedly advised that we had moved but chose to ignore it. The final straw came when I was away visiting my sick mother and my husband was at work. Equita bailiffs telephoned my home and spoke to my son and stated that they were coming to the house that weekend to remove the furniture. He was with his younger brothers and they were all extremely frightened that the door would be broken down."

The penny finally dropped last month and the disgraceful Capita/Lambeth finally cancelled court and bailiff proceedings, withdrew their claims for legal costs and closed Mrs Lacriade's account. In a letter from Capita Business Services, there is a grudging apology "for any inconvenience caused". To add insult to injury, Capita has since written twice to say that Lambeth owes Mrs Lacriade a rebate. The first letter suggested it was for £282, the second that it was £344. And no, she hasn't received either sum yet.



"The three R's – Rights, Rights and Rights..."

EDUCASHUN NEWZ

SCHOOLS which opened their premises to help youth groups, health services, poverty reduction schemes and even the government's Sure Start children's service have run up enormous VAT bills due to their change in status.

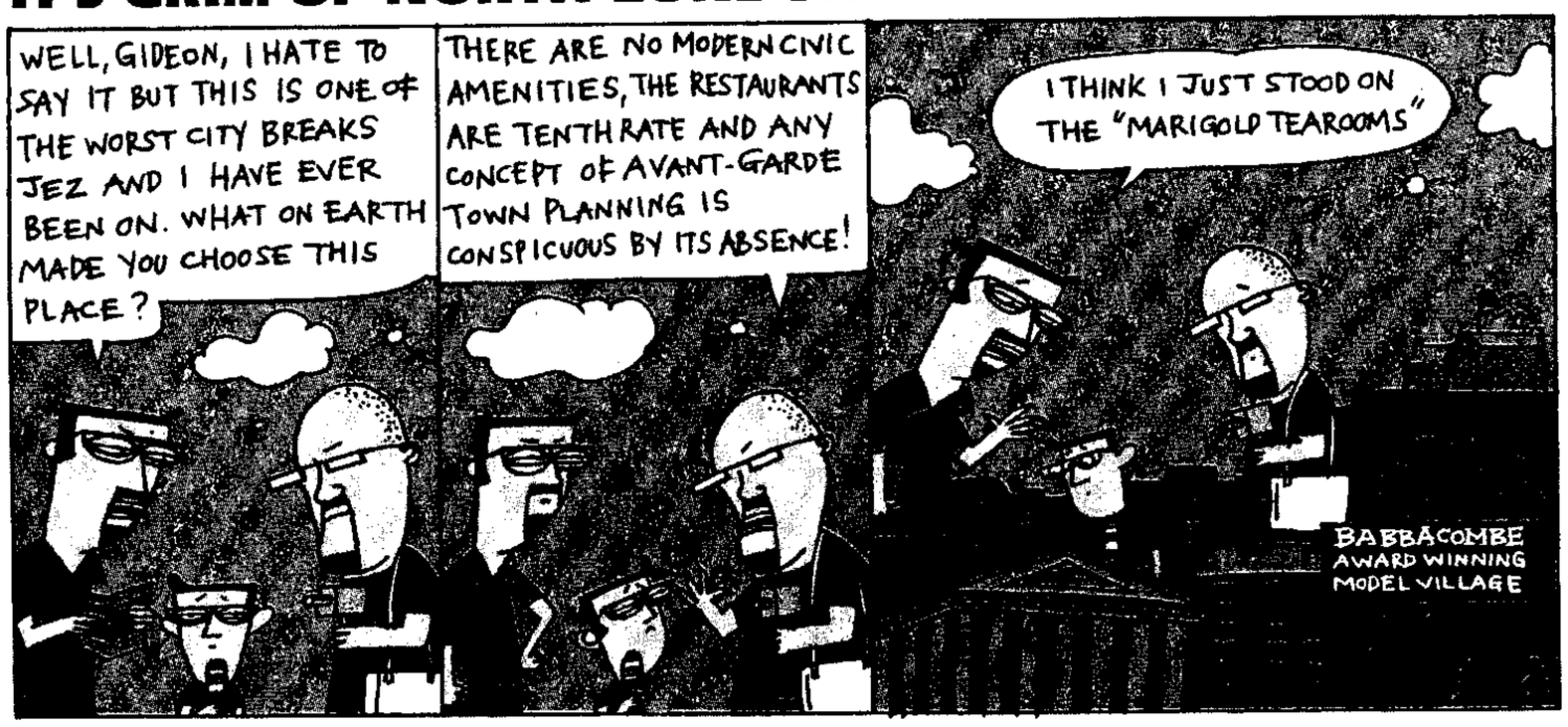
"Extended schools" – mainly set up in poor urban areas where services were not otherwise available – are not automatically excluded from VAT as is statutory school provision. Since the 2002 education act, many schools have used their new "community facilities power" to devise innovative schemes to provide community services, including sports and cultural activities, childcare, evening classes, jobs advice points, post offices and credit unions.

Several local education authorities have now exceeded their VAT limits thanks to the problem and are likely to face funding shortages as a result. *Community Care* magazine reported that Gloucester council calculated the VAT bill was likely to cost it more than £1m.

The Sure Start Unit is apparently lobbying the chancellor behind the scenes for a change in the VAT rules, but in the meantime LEAs which have tried to do their bit for poor communities are picking up the bill.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


WELL, GIDEON, I HATE TO SAY IT BUT THIS IS ONE OF THE WORST CITY BREAKS JEZ AND I HAVE EVER BEEN ON. WHAT ON EARTH MADE YOU CHOOSE THIS PLACE?
THERE ARE NO MODERN CIVIC AMENITIES, THE RESTAURANTS ARE TENTH RATE AND ANY CONCEPT OF AVANT-GARDE TOWN PLANNING IS CONSPICUOUS BY ITS ABSENCE!
I THINK I JUST STOOD ON THE "MARIGOLD TEAROOMS"
BABBACOMBE AWARD WINNING MODEL VILLAGE

NOOKS and CORNERS

So, farewell then Sir Stuart Lipton...

THE resignation of property developer Sir Stuart Lipton as chairman of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) [*Eyes passim*] has been greeted with dismay and incomprehension in the introverted world of architecture.

Lipton's contribution was praised in a speech by RIBA president George Ferguson (architects naturally know on which side their bread is buttered). And in *The Architects' Journal* one looks in vain for any mention of one of the main reasons the independent audit was critical of CABE in the light of the Nolan rules on standards in public life: no fewer than eight of CABE's commissioners have interesting connections with Stanhope plc, Lipton's development company.

"Why does he have to go?" asked a naive editorial. "According to the auditor's report, his crime is to hold the morally untenable position of being both a property developer and the chair of CABE. Strangely, this was not seen as a problem when he served 10 years as a Royal Fine Arts Commissioner while simultaneously being involved with developments such as the Royal Opera House, South Bank and Tate Modern. Nor when he was appointed to CABE in 1999, awarded a knighthood in 2000, or reappointed as chair of CABE in 2002." Well, it *should* have been a problem.

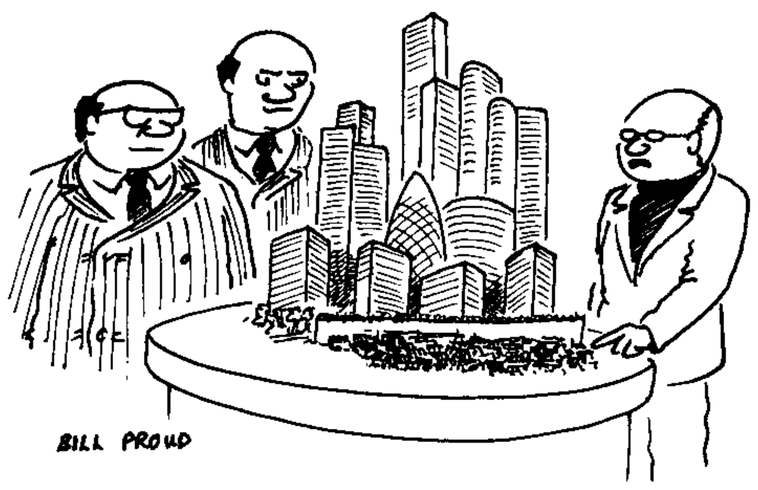
Now more is emerging about CABE's activities in looking after its own. Although (hooray!) it has since been listed, the attempt by the crown commissioners to demolish the Regent Palace Hotel (*Eye* 1105) is still being supported by CABE – *secretly*, despite its ostensible status as a publicly accountable and open body. CABE thinks the hotel is "unremarkable". But who asked CABE? Its remit is to review new designs, not assess the quality of historic buildings. And who is to design the replacement? Why Graham Morrison of Allies & Morrison, architects, who happens to be a CABE commissioner.

Then there is the case of Toddington Manor (*Eye* 1103) in which CABE announced that the huge "enabling development" proposed by Warner Hotels is in principle acceptable, despite its impact on a scheduled landscape and on the setting of a spectacular grade I listed house. Why on earth is CABE pronouncing on such things and what does it know about them?

In both cases such assessments should be made by the expert statutory body charged with such tasks: English Heritage. Unlike EH, CABE has no historians on its staff and is not equipped to make the necessary objective judgements. Its members know only that they approve of exciting new buildings (ideally designed by exciting fashionable architects).

CABE should mind its own business.

'Piloti'



"...and here's the shanty town for the key workers"

HIGH PRINCIPALS

FEARS for the future of the trade union education department at Manchester College of Arts and Technology (MANCAT) were first raised in *Eye* 969, back in 1999.

Principal Peter Tavernor had threatened staff who organised a legal one-day strike with gross misconduct charges; and there were noises about closing the facility which provides training courses for branch reps, legal reps and health and safety reps from all unions.

It took him longer than expected but the closure of the department has now come to pass. The five teaching staff were told in May that the unit was to shut with immediate effect, they were all to be made redundant and they were all banned from entering college premises forthwith. Courses already booked were cancelled.

Many of the staff in the department play a significant role in the college's branch of lecturers' union Natfhe and have been active in disputes with college management over problems faced by workers elsewhere in the college. Strikes have continued to plague the college, with many staff walking out last July to take part in a "dignity at work" demonstration following a long-running row over allegations of workplace bullying in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) department.

After the Romans
Following the departure of the Romans from the county, there was an infiltration of Anglicans who established whole settlements which in many cases have remained to the present day.

History of Lancashire Handbook

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

I-SPY *Bexleyheath, Kent*

Submitted by A.Holliday £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs)*

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

WHAT is going on in Cardiff, where the young music director of Welsh National Opera, Tugan Sokhiev, has fallen victim to sharp tongues and much sniping gossip?

It isn't uncommon for orchestras to fall out with their music directors – it's almost *de rigueur* in fact — but there's a particularly nasty hate campaign brewing against Sokhiev, who has now pulled out of several productions he was contracted to conduct.

Sokhiev was all of 24 when he took up the job last year amid a fair amount of gossip even then about why he was appointed. He had no obvious experience in opera other than a single *La Boheme* in Iceland (not one of the world's great vocal centres) and another trial *Boheme* in Cardiff that the WNO orchestra considered unremarkable.

Outside opera his experience wasn't extensive either, largely based in outfits like the North Osetian State Philharmonic of Vladikavkaz (no kidding: there *is* such a thing) in which he rose to the dizzy heights of principal conductor.

The question on many Welsh orchestral lips – why did Sokhiev get the job? – has grown to something of a clamour as his subsequent appearances in charge at Cardiff – *Don Giovanni*, *Traviata* – have attracted miserable reviews.

His players have been calling him "Boy Blunder" and "the biggest single mistake in WNO's history", responsible for a collapse of company morale. But they've also started a stage-whispering campaign that points out how young, cute and "cosmetically fragrant" he is, and how attractive such qualities might have appeared (especially on a dour night in Iceland) to the bachelor chief executive of WNO, Anthony Freud.

When Sokhiev's charms cast comparable spells on the star of his own *Don Giovanni* and resulted in a serious, continuing relationship, the orchestra had a field day. And so it goes on.

Poor Mr Freud, an internationally respected opera chief, insists Sokhiev was appointed on merit not looks. And whatever the WNO orchestral players think of their conductor, he seems to have gone down well with the Philharmonia Orchestra which has given him several well-received dates. But that hasn't stopped the vicious talk, which is threatening to sour WNO's long-awaited move to its new home, the Wales Millennium Centre, later this year.

It's time for the mild-mannered Freud to put his foot down and exert some discipline… or for Sokhiev to prove himself the star Mr Freud believes him to be.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

Letters

Age rage

Sir,

Rather than "putting the record straight" (Letters, 25 June), Clare Dodgson, chief executive of the Legal Services Commission, is not coming clean on the way in which the LSC has targeted Hossack's solicitors over care home closures. I say this from a position of some knowledge as the national citizen's advocate for the Relatives Action Group for the Elderly (RAGE).

Our national organisation assists families and communities in campaigning against the forced closure of care homes.

Ms Dodgson states that part of the reason why the LSC cannot pay Mrs Hossack's travel costs is when a local solicitor can adequately deal with such cases. From our extensive experience, there is literally a handful across the UK who can handle such complex issues (we know of only two).

Fighting the closure of a care home requires great skill; understanding of complex human rights and community care proceedings; understanding the needs of residents, many with profound disabilities; knowledge of procedures of local authorities, etc. It also requires great sensitivity in dealing with families and residents who may be frightened.

When a council decides to close a care home, gives just three months' notice and ignores all so-called "consultation feedback", there is often significant pressure and deadlines to meet. In one case Ms Hossack got extensive reports on the danger of closure from leading clinical psychiatrists. All were ignored, including at the high court and court of appeal. Home closes. Result? Ten deaths in a couple of months.

MARK OLEY,

National Advocate, Rage UK, Birmingham.

Sir,

Clare Dodgson's defence of the actions of the LSC makes no sense. I can attest to the dearth of legal expertise in the community care field. The few lawyers who choose this area have noble motives and much of their work is unpaid. It is madness to limit numbers of clients when there is a national crisis, when thousands are suffering and dying due to murderous public policies. LSC practice excludes citizens from equal justice, and smothers the flame of their hope by driving out the few experts still persevering. Yvonne Hossack should be cherished by the LSC, not obstructed.

PAM COUGHLAN,

Exeter.

Sir,

As a local councillor I have seen a number of elderly constituents faced with the spineless monolith of local government seeking to forcibly evict them from their homes. Hossack's has been the only legal practice able to deal with this and stop such obscenities.

*When it appears that many others – and I'm sad to include fellow elected members of my borough – couldn't give a flying **** for these residents, Hossack's, at no small commercial risk to themselves, have stepped in.*

For the LSC to observe from a distance and make judgements prejudicial to my constituents' well-being and health is quite gut-wrenching; it is an absolute outrage and should be exposed for the disgrace that it is.

CHRIS OLIVER,

Independent Residents' Association councillor, London Borough of Havering.

Sir,

Those who through old age, frailty or illness are no longer heard in our society need someone who really cares to speak on their behalf. We ought to be ashamed that because there is no economic return on care, we stand by and allow our older population to be abused in all the different ways they now are.

Instead of ending their lives in security and peace, many are facing up to disruption and loss, either by losing their home to pay for care or losing the care home that they finally adjusted to living in because it is closing.

Have we become so desensitised to the misery of the weak and vulnerable that we turn away so easily? What if this was a member of your family... what if it was you?

SANDRA COOMBS,

Leamington Spa.

Sir,

About two years ago Yvonne Hossack came to the home my father was in at the request of a relative of one of the other residents. Yvonne not only gave her legal knowledge but assisted us to form our action committee in order for the relatives (who are so often unknown to each other and therefore fighting the local councils and/or government policies as individuals) to become a united body. Her initial legal intervention bought us the time we needed to alert other relatives; the local population; and the media of the plans to move these frail elderly people who were unable to speak up for themselves. Without Mrs Hossack's intervention three of Norfolk's best council-run residential homes for the elderly would have been closed. She is a very dedicated lady who is not afraid to upset the establishment in pursuit of a cause she believes in.

BERYL POUNTNEY,

Downham Market.

Lookalike

Saddam

Haddock

Sir,

Given Saddam's propensity for using lookalikes, is there any possibility they have the wrong man? Something smells fishy in Baghdad!

SEAN COSGROVE,

Via email.

Carman balls

Sir,

Your article on the recently deceased solicitor Kevin Dooley is incorrect when it states "Another big pal was the late George Carman QC, who frequently watched Liverpool at Anfield with free tickets supplied by Dooley".

While my father certainly knew Dooley, he never attended any Liverpool football match at Anfield. Indeed, it would be true to say that he hated watching football or any other sport. The last occasion George Carman attended a football match was April 29th 1970, the FA Cup Final replay between Chelsea and Leeds, played at Old Trafford.

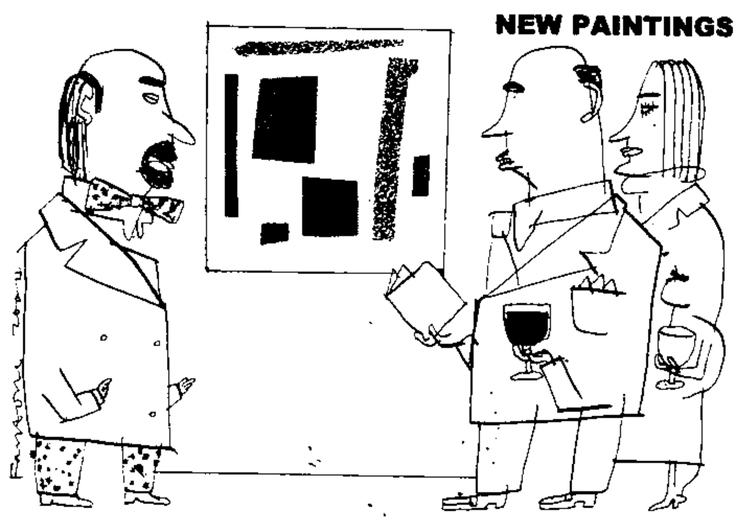
The tickets for this match were a present to my father from his client and regular drinking buddy, George Best (see the latter's recent memoirs, Scoring at Half Time). The reason I remember this is because it was the first football match which I attended (as an eight-year-old boy) and on the same evening, I was introduced to Bobby Charlton and Sir Matt Busby.

Yours,

DOMINIC CARMAN,

Via email.

Scenes You Seldom See



"Forget matching the carpet and curtains. I want something really expensive, very big and relentlessly challenging"

Stuffed cabbage?

Sir,

Hurrah... After reading your magazine for 20 years, I finally felt I ought to write to you!

I'm sorry, the picture of a Thai restaurant with the "amusing name" "CABBAGES & CONDOMS" is not a funny mistake. Just like its sister restaurant in Bangkok it is thus named because its founder wanted to educate people about the use of condoms in the Far East. He wanted to see a situation where condoms were as easy to obtain as, say, cabbage. Profits from the restaurants support various family planning and HIV awareness programmes.

Yours etc,

MARTIN DERBYSHIRE,

Lisburn, Northern Ireland.

By appointment

Sir,

Helen Liddell has been appointed as the next high commissioner to Australia, not the next governor-general (Eye 1109). The governor-general is appointed by the Queen on the advice of the prime minister of Australia, not by the British prime minister. And the post goes to an Australian – on past form, to corrupt former bishops – not to retired British politicians.

MATTHEW BURCHELL,

London NW6.

Talking dirty

Sir,

Well bugger me! All this talk about "chief fudge-packers" in the New Directions magazine seems to have missed the point. Hasn't anyone noticed how similar "new directions" sounds to "nude erections"? Am I the only filthy minded Christian to spot this? I think I should be told!

Yours, enjoying holding a quality organ once a fortnight,

LYNDA MAPP,

Hull, E. Yorks.

LUVVIES

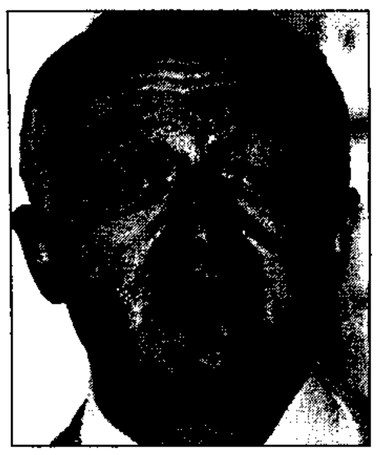
"I didn't know much about Pinter," she pronounces matter-of-factly. "I haven't seen many of his productions before. I only had this vague idea of black polo necks and Gitanes – incredibly intellectual. But actually, when I read the play my reaction to it was 'God, this man must be good in bed'."

HELEN McCRORY
Evening Standard

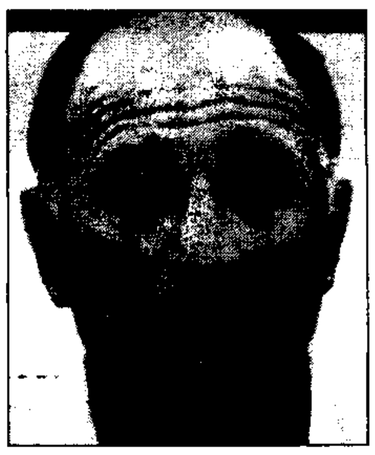
Submitted by C.J. Apperley

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Lookalike



Scolari



Livingstone

Sir,

I cannot possibly be alone in noting the spooky resemblance between London's Red Ken and Portugal's football boss Luiz Felipe Scolari? Can their prospects be related?

Sincerely
(Dr) STUART DUNN,

Via email.

Hot air

Sir,

Re: BoffinBalls. What a pity Boffin's grasp of climate change is as shaky as that of the Hollywood disaster movie and press response he so derides (Under the Microscope, 1109). Regional climate can vary independently of atmospheric CO_2 content – as seen in the Greenland ice cores – no petrol-slurping Cadillacs required. But the converse is not true; when CO_2 changes, the global climate system always responds. This is what the laws of physics dictate, and it is what the Greenland and Antarctic ice cores confirm. The greenhouse effect makes Earth habitable – the planet would be frozen over otherwise. An enhanced (not runaway) greenhouse effect, driven by humans, will cause climatic change, including a general warming. We see it happening already. The tricky bit is to predict exactly in what way, by how much, where and when. By studying the past behaviour of the climate system, Eric Wolff and his international colleagues aim to shed some valuable light on the matter.

Yours sincerely,
PROF. CHRIS RAPLEY,

Director, British Antarctic Survey.

PS: I don't want to alarm your readership, but I understand you have a photograph illustrating the potential impact of a warmer world on, for example, journalistic dress code. ***(No. Ed.)***

Fill yer Boots?

Sir,

Re your Boots pension story. It's sad to see In the Back in thrall to the (grotesquely overpaid) snake oil salesmen of the bond market and their running dogs. When inflation comes back and longevity increases further, you would see how secure a bond-only investment policy really is, except that (unless you have just left school) you likely won't be here anyway. In the real world it is just not possible to "immunise" pension liabilities with bonds, and it is yet another case of investment mis-selling – this time by Private Eye – to pretend otherwise.

STEPHEN HODGE,

London N6.

Well read

Sir,

During my more active years, firstly as a soldier, later a deep-sea sailor and latterly as a taxi driver, I have had to cope with long periods of inactivity. Hours of tedium were relieved by reading, and the habit continues. I read both for self-improvement and pleasure. No ordinary working man could ever have afforded to buy the countless books I have borrowed from libraries here and around the world.

As I approach retirement, troubled only by an avaricious housing association and the ever-increasing cost of beer, I now find that my local library has closed. The temporary facility, with which we are stuck until next spring, is well below the standard a council taxpayer should expect. I am one of the many users (Eye 1109) "unhappy about the poor temporary facilities in a 'hut' on the staff car park of the local museum" and applaud Library News for its service to our impoverished community.

Yours sincerely,
D. CRAIG,

Licensed taxi driver, Gosport, Hants.

Accuracy and Roaccutane

Sir,

I found your exposé of the acne drug Roaccutane (In The Back, "Spot The Side-Effects", 1109) to be very scathing and, more unusually, a very one-sided piece.

As much as I hate to side with shadowy drug companies, Roaccutane has been used effectively by millions who, like me, want nothing more than to look normal.

The lessons to be learnt from the tragic experiences in the news have more to do with personal responsibility for one's own health than the evils of Roaccutane, or the totally unrelated Halcion mentioned in passing but delivered as damning evidence. It's really very simple: never buy drugs off the internet and discontinue use if you feel your health is being compromised by this or any drug.

Roaccutane is linked to depression and suicide, but the manufacturers admit this and warn against its use by people who have a history of depression in their product information which comes with every packet.

While the company may not be fully accountable, neither they, GPs nor dermatologists force this drug on to people. It is ultimately a personal decision to accept treatment and one which should not be entered into lightly because of the severity of the side-effects.

Yours faithfully,
SARAH PRENTICE,

Swansea.

Sir,

I read "pot the side-effects" (1109) with horror. I too have taken Roaccutane and developed severe neuropathy in my hips and legs. I also know of someone else here in south-east London with severe joint pain from Roaccutane. I would be very grateful if you could give me any contact details for Cathy Perkins whose son has suffered terribly from this drug.

Yours,
CAROLINE BRENNAN,

Via email.

Sir,

Roaccutane is strictly regulated and can only be prescribed by hospital dermatologists for patients with severe acne. It has nasty side effects, but patients beg for it because it works for a distressing condition which can cause depression, social rejection and permanent facial scarring. Suicide is hardly unknown in teenagers who have a body image problem made worse by huge boils erupting from their faces.

I have prescribed Roaccutane for hundreds of patients, and far from becoming depressed they are likely to skip for joy as their acne clears.

The birth defect risk is well known and female patients are fully counselled and given written warnings: under new guidelines they will have to use two methods of contraception and have a monthly pregnancy test.

There is no evidence that self-harm is more common in patients on Roaccutane. You can't rule out the occasional case of mental disturbance being caused by a drug, but this story is clearly being driven by a handful of bereaved parents who cannot accept that their child chose to die. They can't sue God or even Kurt Cobain, so go for the big bad drug company. The same lawyers who drive these cases forward will be back in a few years acting on behalf of people who are depressed by permanent facial scarring which could have been prevented by effective treatment, denied by doctors who were scared of being sued.

DR STEPHEN HAYES,

(GP with special interest in dermatology), Southampton, Hampshire.

Euroballs

£10 paid for contributions

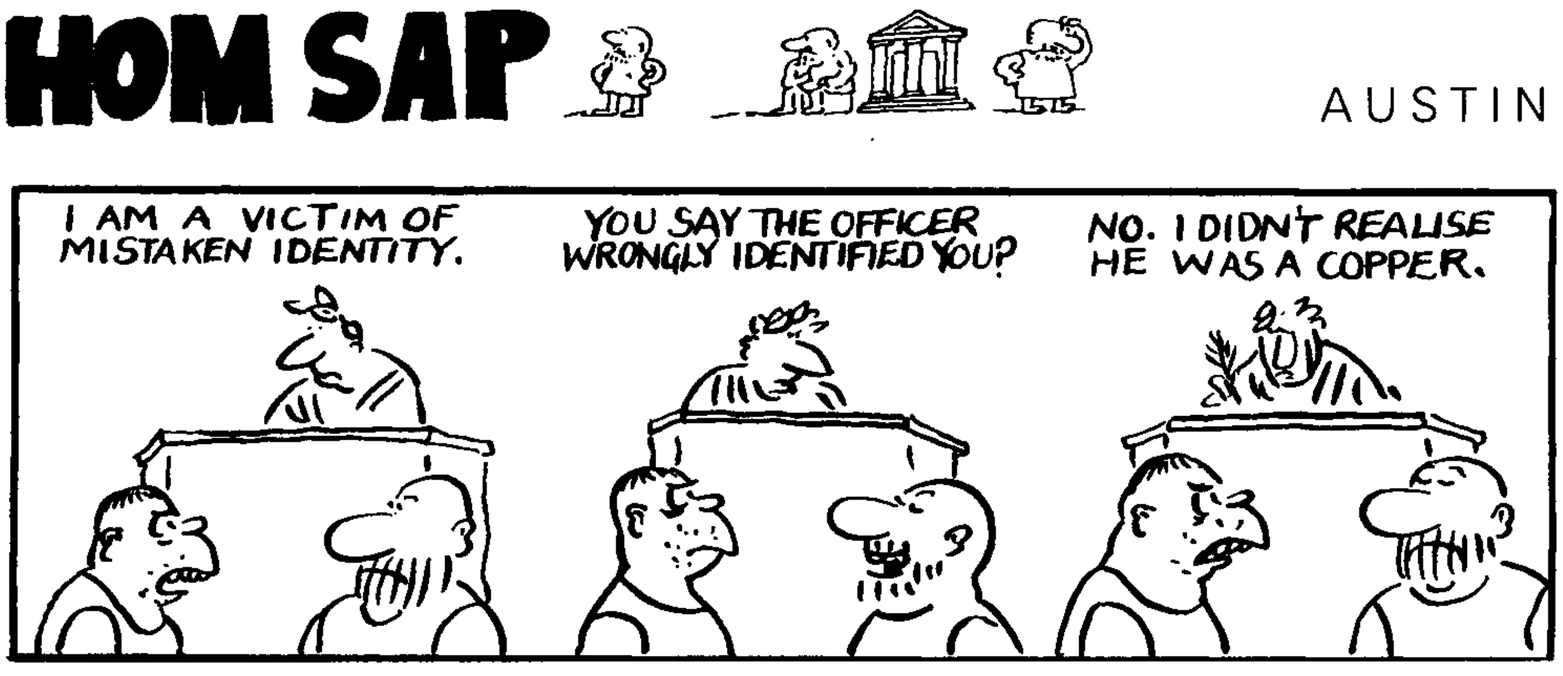
"They've tasted the other side of the coin on so many occasions."
ANDY TOWNSEND, ITV
(Emyr Gareth)

"Portugal had more possession but less of the ball..."
MARK LAWRENSON, BBC1
(David Maclennan)

"These tournaments come round every two years – we can't expect to win them every year."
MICHAEL OWEN
(Jean Wallace)

"Sorry to interrupt myself..."
JOHN MOTSON, BBC1
(Michael Turner)

"With Zidane you expect the unexpected, but sometimes it just doesn't happen."
Commentator, ITV
(Roger Downham)


HOM SAP
AUSTIN
I AM A VICTIM OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY.
YOU SAY THE OFFICER WRONGLY IDENTIFIED YOU?
NO. I DIDN'T REALISE HE WAS A COPPER.

Bloomers Day?

Sir,

Thanks for your contribution to Bloomsday which made a good stab at capturing the Joycetastic academic onanism of the event.

But I wonder did you realise the significance of two of your illustrations in real Ireland, if such a place exists? The photo of typical Dubliners is in fact a picture of a group of Englishmen. But it is not any random group on a stag night in Temple Bar (note lack of tattoos). Unlike some stag parties it would be pretty legitimate for this collection to bellow out a chorus of "No Surrender to the IRA" as they are in fact "The Cairo Gang", the team sent by MI6 from London to wipe out Irish guerrilla leader Michael Collins and his supporters during the Irish War on Independence (roughly 1920).

This group were themselves wiped out by Collins before they could kill him, early one Sunday morning, British forces striking back later that day by walking into a football stadium and randomly shooting civilians, giving rise to the first "Bloody Sunday". It's not just historians and authors who repeat themselves endlessly in Ireland, but events too. Must be the booze.

This sequence of events was well captured, in un-nationalistic gruesomeness, in the Neil Jordan film of Michael Collins. Unemployed media studies graduates will doubtless know that the chap in the middle of the photo (with cigarette), who I believe was called Soames, was excellently played in the film by Charles Dance, Redditch's favourite son.

The other point of note is your map. The arrow you have pointing to a building as "Bank of Sinn Fein", which could have pointed to any random building in Dublin, a city of over a million people, actually points to the headquarters of the Irish Defence Forces, the Irish equivalent of the Pentagon.

Yours,
DES HICKEY,
Baile Surbiton, Contae Na Suire, Sasanna (*).
(*) Surbiton, Surrey, England.

Wimbleballs

£10 paid for contributions

"It's disappointing to have lost – that's the bee's knees of it..."
TIM HENMAN
(Michael Bench-Capon)

"Henman should leave here with his head hung high..."
JONATHEN OVEREND, Radio 5 Live
(Alwyn Turner)

"For ten years Schalken has been in the world's top fifty or better..."
Commentator, BBC
(Sion Davies)

"It was a good shot, but he didn't execute it very well."
ANNABEL CROFT, BBC
(J.F. Beresford)

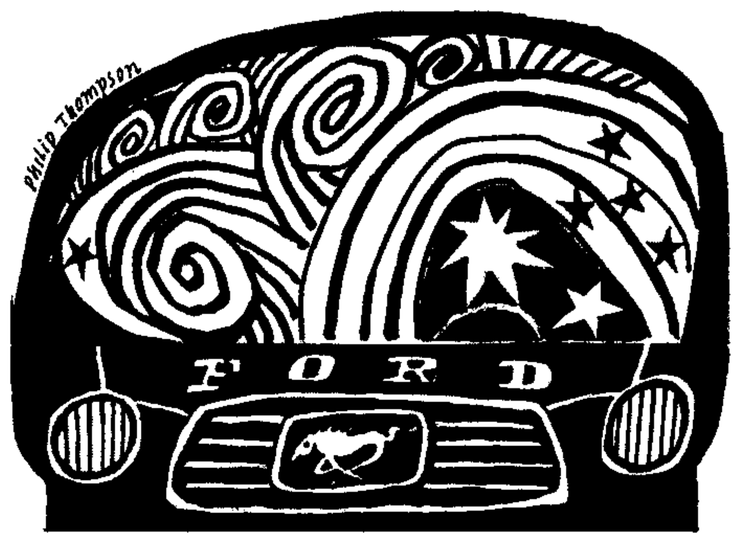
"He [Andy Roddick] doesn't make mistakes, only when he has to."
ANDREW CASTLE
(Ian Wright)

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "I wanted to play a prank on her, but I can see now that I hadn't really thought it through," thirty-five-year-old Shannon Kramer admitted to police officers from his hospital bed in Jacksonville, Florida. "I'd driven my girlfriend out to the beach in my Ford Mustang, and she'd got out. She was walking around, and I was sitting in the driver's seat, and I thought it would be kinda funny to shoot a firework at her out through the car window.

"I had a box of six-inch rockets with me, so I took one out, aimed it at her through the window, and lit it. Only then did I realise that the electric window was wound up, and that because I hadn't left the key in the ignition, I couldn't wind it down. I suppose I should have



opened the door quickly and got out, but by the time I'd thought of that, the rocket had gone off, and started whooshing round and round inside the car. It was awful. So bright and loud and hot and fast. I thought I was dead. I couldn't see, I couldn't hear, it set fire to my hair and clothes, and ended up jammed between my legs and shooting flames into my buttocks.

"When it was all over, I tried to get out, but I couldn't walk or even stand up, and I was temporarily blinded. The ambulance men told me I've got second-degree burns to my buttocks, groin and legs. And needless to say, I've lost my eyelashes and most of my body hair, and the rocket even scorched an outline of my sandals onto my feet. I suppose it's lucky that the rest of the rockets didn't catch light too, otherwise I might really have been in trouble." *(Orlando Sentinel and St Petersburg Times, 5/4/04. Spotter: Michael Crowe)*

● *"Medically, it makes great sense," Doctor Friedrich Bischinger told a press conference in Innsbruck, "and it is a perfectly natural thing to do. In terms of the immune system, the nose is a filter in which a great deal of bacteria are collected, and when this mixture arrives in the intestines, it works just like medicine. That's why people who regularly pick their nose and eat it are healthier, happier, and better in tune with their bodies."*

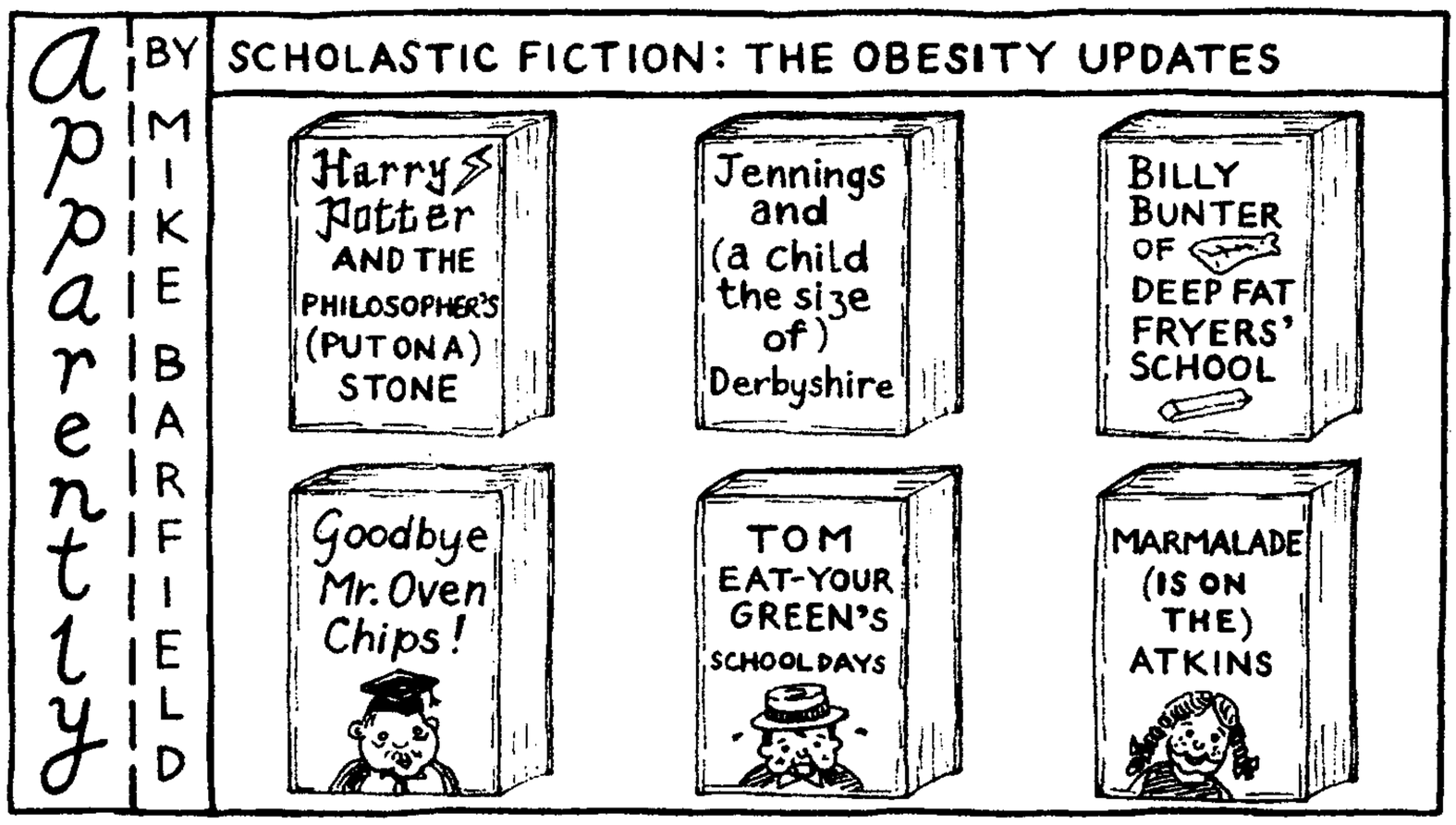
Dr Bischinger, who is Austria's leading lung specialist, recommends that society should adopt a new attitude to nose-picking, and should encourage children to take it up. "Modern medicine is constantly trying to do the same thing through far more complicated methods. People who pick their nose and eat it get a natural boost to their immune system for free. With the finger, you can get to places you just can't reach with a handkerchief, keeping your nose far cleaner. And eating the crusty remains of what you pull out is a great way of strengthening your body's natural defences.

"Children happily pick their noses, and only stop because of pressure from a society that has branded the habit disgusting and anti-social. I would recommend a new approach where children are actively encouraged, and are told 'go on... pick your nose and eat it!' And if you're worried about what your neighbours might think, then encourage them to throw away their hankies, by telling them 'pick your nose and eat it. Do it in private if you like. I guarantee you'll feel the benefits within a week'." (The Worthington [Maine], 14/5/04. Spotter: Kenneth Morton)

– ● –

● "Singing along to popular songs is all very well," Heinz Gerber told reporters gathered in his Hamburg bar, "but karaoke was becoming way too tame for my customers. One night we were trying to think of ways to freshen up the idea, when we realised that what we all love most is watching porn. So we came up with the idea of customers getting up on stage and providing the sound effects for sex films instead of singing. And suddenly, Pornaoke was born."

Since Gerber's brainwave at the end of 2003, Pornaoke bars have been springing up all over Germany. "It's the most fun you'll ever have in public," he continued, "and it will bring out the porn star in you. Couples get up on stage and watch a screen showing a porn film with the volume turned down, then moan and groan into a shared microphone in time to the action. Most people just want to simulate sexual pleasure and climax, and do it more for laughs than lust, but we also offer a sound effects tray, for serious enthusiasts who wish to accompany farmyard porn or S&M. But whatever you choose, it's a great opportunity to celebrate your favourite porn scenes." *(Australian Karaoke News, February 2004. Spotter: Norm Reynolds)*


Apparently
BY MIKE BARFIELD
SCHOLASTIC FICTION: THE OBESITY UPDATES
Harry Potter AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S (PUT ON A) STONE
Jennings and (a child the size of) Derbyshire
BILLY BUNTER OF DEEP FAT FRYERS' SCHOOL
Goodbye Mr. Oven Chips!
TOM EAT-YOUR GREEN'S SCHOOL DAYS
MARMALADE (IS ON THE) ATKINS

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo,

I wonder how many of you can name the ten commandments, without looking them up?

Obviously I can, because I'm the vicar!

And I expect most of you can do the easy ones, such as "thou shalt not kill" and "thou shalt not commit adultery" (no need to remind our former organist Mr Cook about that one!).

But a lot of people tend to overlook the most important commandment of all – the one which says "thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's job".

And who is our neighbour? It's easy, isn't it children?

It's the man who lives next door to you. In, say, my case, that would be Mr Brown, wouldn't it?

Now I'm not saying that Mr Brown is in any way trying to get my job, any more than I am trying to get his! (with the parish finances in their current state, that would be a pretty silly thing to want, wouldn't it?!).

But if Mr Brown was being covetous, that would be very wrong, wouldn't it? "Sinful" even, to use an old-fashioned word that we don't hear much nowadays.

Surely the message is that we all of us have our own job to do in this life, which has been ordained for us, and which we go on doing, to the best of our abilities, for the rest of our lives!

In my case, obviously, it's being your vicar, and so long as I am "fit and well", as Mr Blunkett of the Neighbourhood Watch so succinctly put it last week, then there is no reason why I should not go on doing it for many years to come!

In Mr Brown's case, naturally, the same is true – unless of course he suffers some kind of breakdown, which can happen when a man spends too much time coveting his neighbour's job!

Sorry, but that's the truth of it, which is why the wise men of old, as we read in the Good Book, made it one of the deadly sins!

It drives you mad, and you start getting worked up and bitter about not getting the job which you were never qualified for in the first place, and which I only mentioned to you in that restaurant all those years ago to make you feel better about yourself because I was the one who was going to be vicar and not you!

But seriously, can you imagine Gordon standing shoulder to shoulder with the Rev Dubya, and bringing peace to the whole world?

No, it's laughable, isn't it? Gordon is fine so long as he sticks to what he's good at, poring over the parish accounts (though

goodness knows how he'll cope now he hasn't got his clever young friend Mr Balls to tell him what to do!).

So, thanks to Mr Blunkett for bringing up that commandment as a parish talking point!

And let's quote in full one last time shall we, so that everyone gets the message.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's job, nor his popularity, nor his superior abilities, nor his charisma, nor his boyish good looks, nor his charming and successful wife, nor anything that he hath." *(Book of Numbers, 10 and 11)*

Yours in power!

Tony

For those who missed it –

Mr Campbell's new interview show "Meet Alastair" on St Albion's Hospital Radio got off to a terrific start when he interviewed the former church warden Mr Mandelson. Here is a transcript of their fascinating encounter on the airwaves:

AC: Thanks for coming on the show, Peter.

PM: It's my pleasure, Alastair.

AC: Do you think the vicar is doing a marvellous job?

PM: I do. And so is Mr Brown.

AC: I'm sorry. My headphones appear to be faulty. Did you say Mr Brown was doing a good job?

PM: Yes, the vicar asked me to put in a good word for Gordon who is the natural man to take over when Tony retires in twenty or so years time. If he's still alive.

AC: You mean Tony?

PM: No Gordon. Because he's not a well man is he. Working so hard on those accounts...

AC: Ha, ha, ha.

PM: Ha, ha, ha, ha.

AC: Thank you so much. Now for my next record "Gordon is a Moron" by Jilted John Smith.

A Message from Rev. Dubya Bush of the Church of the Latter-Day Morons

Hosallelujah!

Rejoice, brothers and sisters in the Lord! For today dawneth the dawn of a new dawn!

Today freedom has come to the people of Iraq-land, they who for so long have lived in slavery and darkness!

Today they have once again been given back the priceless gifts of libertation and democritude!

And, above all, we today see the Evil One himself standing in the dark and facing the Day of Judgement. The guy with the black hat has been rounded up by the guy in the white hat with his sheriff's star on his fancy weskit a glintin' in the sun ! *(That's me folks.)*

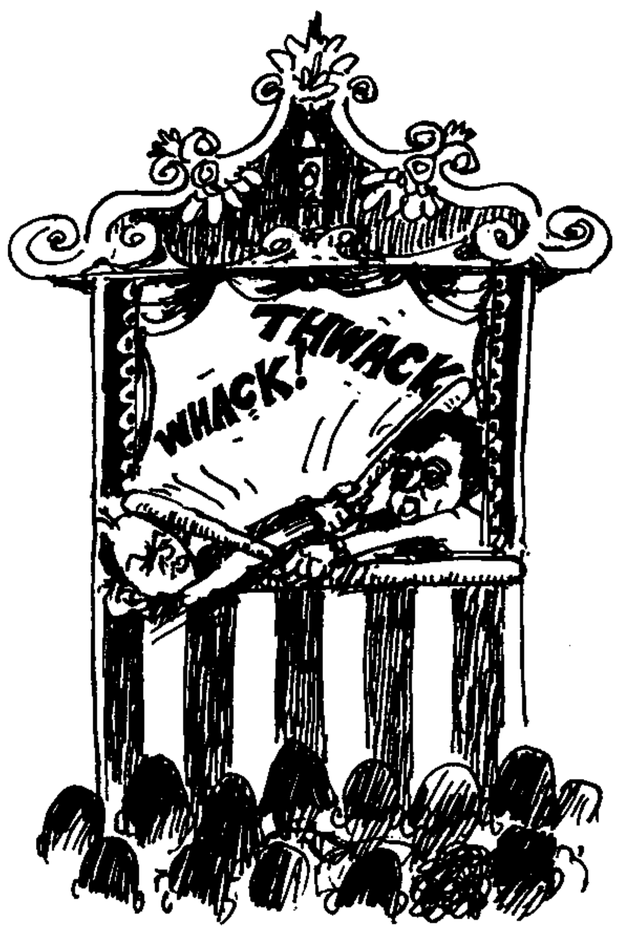
And can you hear that hammerin' from outside the window of the courthouse? Yessir, they're building the gibbet where they're going to hang him high like the no-good horse thief he is!

All that we predicted has come to pass, just as I and Brother Rumsfeld and Sister Condy prophesied. I don't want to say "I told you so" but "I foretold you so!"

Signed

Rev Dubya Bush. (Texas Ranger First Class and US Marshal, Dodge City)

Parish Scenes



The highlight of this year's Fête! Captured by local artist Mr de la Nougerede

BLAIR ANNOUNCES NEW ERA OF CHOICE

by Our Education Staff **Lunchtime O'Choose**

THE Prime Minister has declared his intention to revolutionise the education system in Britain by introducing "choice" into Britain's schools.

"From now on," he said, "you can choose the same policy presented by me or Michael Howard."

He continued, "Most people will obviously choose me, but they will have the option of selecting this policy from Mr Howard, if they wish." The Prime Minister concluded, "People are going to have the right to choose – whether they like it or not."

Mr Kipling, the headmaster of the prestigious Midlands independent school St Cakes (Motto: *Quis paget entrat – Who pays gets in*), dismissed the idea as "unworkable".

"Here at St Cakes," he said, "we are already open to any parent who chooses to spend £30,000 a term. What could be more comprehensive than that?"

My eBay

wham*bam*saddam! (37912)

Items I'm Bidding On (1-3 of 3 items)

	Current Price	Postage Cost	Bids
☐	**'Teach Yourself...' series, paperback – vol. 17 – 'Jurisprudence'**		
	£1.99	£1.50	1
☐	**'Teach Yourself...' series, paperback – vol. 23 – 'Hypnotism'**		
	£1.99	£1.50	1
☐	**'Style-U-Rite' Gent's Beard Personal Grooming Kit – no case**		
	£4.50	£2.00	2

Items I'm Selling (1-3 of 3 items)

	Current Price	Postage Cost	Bids
☐	**Great War Story!*** 'I Was Monty's Double' 2nd edn, fair condition, some margin notes**		
	£1.99p	Free!	0
☐	**'OOh, Betty!'***LOOK!***Frank Spencer-style Black Berets, 2 doz,***FUN item!**		
	£19.99	Buyer to collect	0
☐	**2005 Year Planner**		
	£0.99	Free!	0

★ *Exclusive To Private Eye*

THE WAYNE ROONEY STORY IN FULL

Chapter One

I WAS born yesterday and my mum and dad called me Wayne.

Chapter Two

THIS morning I played football.

Chapter Three

TODAY I sold my autobiography. *The End.*

© No News International.

Venus de J-Lo

campaign

Ad World Fights To Sign Soccer Wonderboy

by Our Advertising Staff
BILL BOARD

BRITAIN's top ad agencies were beating on Wayne Rooney's door last night in a bid to sign up football's latest sensation.

The spud-faced nipper from Merseyside who set the world alight in Euro 2004 is now the hottest property in the endorsement business, worth an estimated £5,000 million a year.

Said top adman Mike Bogleby of Hargleby, Bogleby and Pratt, "We see Wayne as the new face of potatoes".

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam
Marlon Brando

So. Farewell
Then Marlon
Brando,
Method actor and
Hollywood legend.

"Mumble mumble
Mumble."

Yes. That was
Your catchphrase.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

Also Farewell
Then, Anthony Buckeridge,
Creator of *Jennings.*

"Fossilized fish-hooks!"
Yes, that was
Your catchphrase.

But now you
Have been
Sent to see
The Great Beak
In the sky.

Cave God!

E. 'Jennings' Thribb (11½)

Man is jailed for third drenk-drive offence

Loughborough Echo

GRUNTS AND SQUEALS AS SHARAPOVA TRIUMPHS

by Our Sporting Staff LUNCHTIME O'DROOLZ

CENTRE COURT had never heard anything like it. There were 800-decibel yelps of delight and groans of pleasure from the ranks of the world's pressmen, as they realised that they could put a picture of a blonde teenager on their front pages. Their climactic whoops echoed across the hallowed turf, as the sizzling Siberian sex bomb from the land of nuclear nookie stormed her way onto the front pages. "Yes, yes, oh yes!" cried one editor J. Witherow, as he contemplated the display of long legs, blonde hair and all-round corphewwhatalegova

(continued for 94 pages)

BAGHDAD TIMES

Friday July 9 2004

Nation Celebrates As Democracy Returns To Iraq

by Our Entire Staff **Mohammed Hastings**

SCENES of jubilation all over the country yesterday greeted the historic "handover of power".

Old-age pensioners shot each other openly in the streets, as the sky above Baghdad exploded in an unforgettable display of fireworks, suicide bombs and ground-to-air missiles.

Teenagers joined hands to rush eagerly to the nearest bomb shelter, as helicopter gunships staged a magnificent demonstration of indiscriminate targeted killing.

Sunni Delight

Centrepiece of the celebrations was the ceremonial "handover" itself, when a small group of shifty-looking men in suits gathered under heavy security to read out a statement specially written for them by Mr Paul Bremner, the celebrated impressionist.

The new prime minister of the Free and Independent Democratic Republic of Iraq, Mr Ayad-that-President-Bush-in-the-back-of-the-cab-once, declared, "We, the undersigned, take delivery of one entire country (slightly damaged) and hereby undertake that we will exempt the United States and its allies from any responsibility for anything that happens in the future. Long live Afghanistan – I'm sorry, that should be Iraq."

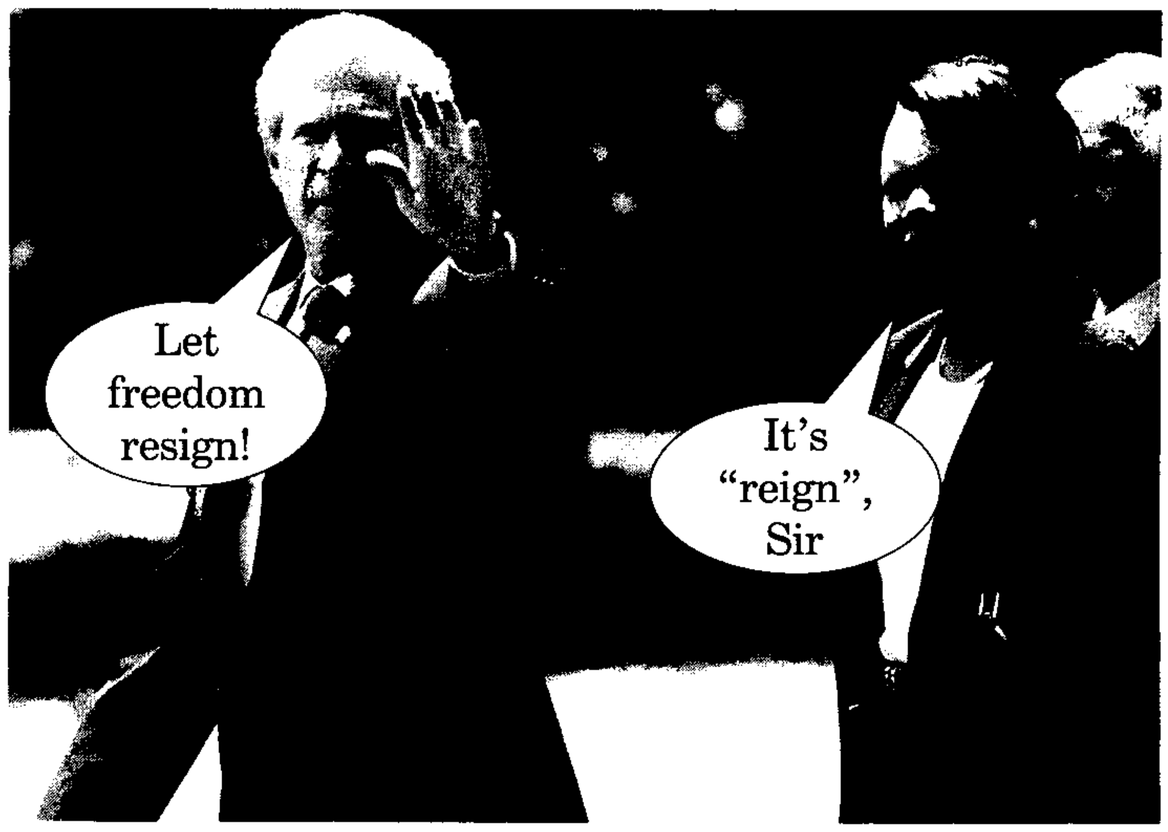
Mr Bremner then gave his impression of a man running for his life towards the nearest aeroplane.

On Other Pages

Election Latest – Saddam Ahead In Polls 3

"I've got it! We trump up a tale about a beautiful Greek girl, who's been abducted by the wicked Trojans..."

BUSH WELCOMES HANDOVER



ADVERTISEMENTS

Join Al Qaeda and see the next world.

"It's a man's death in the Holy Army"

Apply Cave No. 3, Tora Bora Complex, Afghanistan

Turn Your Bomb Crater Into A Hollywood-Style Swimming Pool!!! *(When water comes back on!)*

The Ali Gnome Complete Crater-to-Pool Kit. Contents: one hose. 50 Dinars.

Westerners? Don't lose your head! "Go native" with the Ali Gnome False Beard and Tea Towel Set. 3,000 Dinars.

● WARNING: You may be shot by US Forces

ARMY SURPLUS!

Amazing Bargain!

We have one surplus army, for sale to highest bidder. Will do anything, go anywhere and blow anything up. Tanks, guns included *(sorry – no WMD!)*.

Only one previous owner *(Mr S. Hussein)*

MAN LOSES TENNIS MATCH

A BRITISH man today lost a tennis match which he usually does at this time of year. *(Reuters)*

On Other Pages

Men lose football match	**1**
Other men lose rugby match	**2**
Yet more men lose cricket match	**3**
Millions die in Sudan	**94**

Radio

Michael Howard's Desert Island Disc Choices

1. Transylvania 65000 *The Glenn Miller Orchestra*

2. Stranglers In The Night *Frank Sinatra*

3. Bat Out Of Hell *Meatloaf*

4. A Young Person's Guide To The Jugular *Benjamin Bitten*

5. Are You Going To Widdecombe Fayre? *Simon and Garlicfunkel*

(That's enough music)

Luxury: Silk-lined coffin

Book: Not the Bible.

News **Watch/Listen** to BBC News

• **Iraqis to take custody of Saddam**

• Ovary transplant pregnancy first

BBC website

SHOULD SWISS REF BE HANDED OVER FOR TRIAL?

by Our Football Staff
Al Garve and **Liz Bon**

THERE were growing demands last night for the Swiss referee, whose crimes have caused suffering to millions of Britons, to be handed over to a British court.

Speaking on behalf of the victims, Mr Sidney Bonkers, a white-flag-driver from Neasden said, "It is only natural justice that Saddam Meier should face the impartial judgement of a panel of patriotic English Sun-readers".

Saddam Meier

Gutted

Said Mr Bonkers, "My entire family was wiped out by his decision to disallow Sol's goal, due to the quantity of alcohol we were forced to consume in order to come to terms with our predicament."

"After this horrifying crime perpetrated by this Alpine assassin from the land of the cuckoo clock, many of my friends were left lying in heaps, legless and brain dead."No wonder we want to give Herr Meier a fair trial before we string him up."

10 Tell-Tale Signs To Help You Spot A Swiss

❶ Mad staring eyes
❷ Stupid beard
❸ Black shorts and shirt
❹ Blind
❺ Totally embittered by England's 3-0 victory over his compatriots
❻ Pockets stuffed with bribes from England-hating German arms manufacturers
❼ Eats revolting cheese full of holes
❽ Silly green hat with feather
❾ Constantly whistles "Edelweiss" and "Hills are alive with the sound of music"
❿ Bastard!!!

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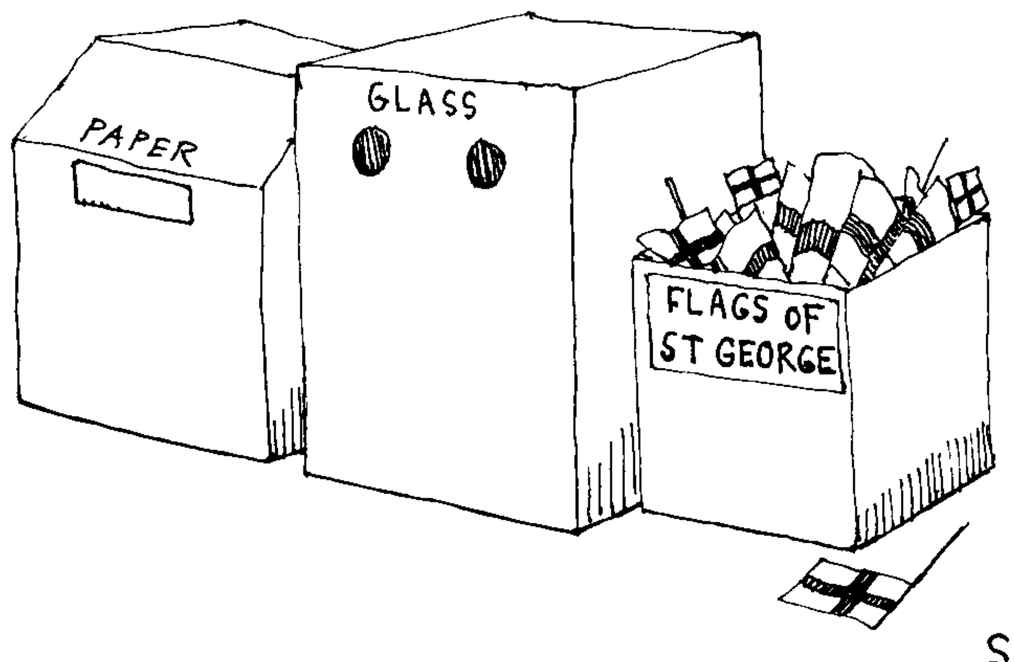


S.B

World of Soccer

NORTH LONDON CLUB WINS EURO 2004

by **E.I. Addios**, Our Man In The Stadio da Luz With The Taramasalata Sandwich And The Bottle Of Retsina

THE WORLD of soccer was rocked to its foundations yesterday when a Neasden-based team of Greek part-timers won the Euro 2004 Championships at odds of 10,000,000-1.

Said their manager, the German-born Sid Himmler: "On the surface you would think this was just a collection of waiters and tailors, but these boys have got magic in their boots. I have trained them day and night to think only of victory.

"Today Portugal – tomorrow the World Cup!"

LATE SCORE

Euro 2004 (Final)

Portugal 0
Neasden Olympicos 1
(Stassinopolos)

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

PRODUCT RECALL

Item: England Football Team
Ref: Euro 06/2004

The English Football Association (FA) has learned that there may be the possibility of a potential choking hazard when watching the England Football Team.

Our customers' safety is extremely important and, as a precautionary measure, the English FA are now notifying all English Football consumers of the potential failure of certain older parts within the England product, particularly *Beckham. Euro 06/2004*. Despite recent modifications, and the effect of new replacement parts *(Rooney. Euro 06/2004)*, the team has recently been found to be susceptible to the occasional fault after repeated use in high-octane, stressful conditions.

the PREMIERSH*TS

PAUL WOOLEY

THE BECKHAM BRAND IS LOOKING TIRED - ANY RELAUNCH IDEAS?
MEGABUCKS AGENCY
LOOSER
HE'S LOST IT
THE BECKS "OFF TARGET" T-SHIRT?
LIFESTYLE POSTER?
BECKS SAYS AIM HIGH (ROW Z)
PANTS?
HE'S PANTS AT FOOTBALL
I KNOW, THE BECKS ANTIDEPRESSANT
MUCH BETTER, A PERFECT MATCH OF PRODUCT AND CLIENT!

BISHOPS LASH BLAIR OVER IRAQ

by Our Religious Affairs Staff **Alexander Chancel**

ALL 379 bishops of the Church of England last night backed a sensational attack on the prime minister's Iraqi policy, more or less accusing him of condoning torture, mass-murder and genocide.

The astonishing, no-holds-barred broadside against Tony Blair's war crimes was written personally by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Hon Rowan Atkinson (TV's 'Mr Beard').

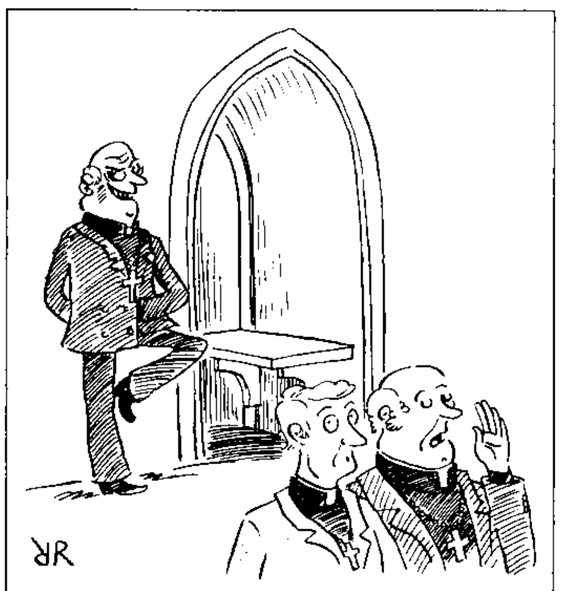
THAT BEARDIE LETTER IN FULL (What You Didn't Read)

Dear Prime Minister,

You know, in a very real sense, those of us who watch television have in recent weeks experienced a profound sense of disquiet and moral unease over the apparent breach of internationally-agreed standards and codes of behaviour which may or may not have taken place in respect of recent events in those parts of the Middle East where a peaceful resolution has yet to be acheived, and where the litmus test of acceptable criteria for sustainable governance could well be seriously jeopardised were we to be perceived to be operating by a double standard with regard to the exacerbation of international tension at this moment in time.

And now, Hymn No. 94, *'Onward Moslem Soldiers'*

● Can you make head or tail of the Archbishop's letter? Tell us what you think he means, and you could win free tickets to Choral Evensong in one of Britain's top cathedrals.



"He's a bit of a louche canon that one"

THANKS to everyone who pointed out to us that the moorhen we featured in last Thursday's Citizen was in fact a coot!

We also have to apologise for the picture of a buffalo on January 3 which was in fact a bison and on December 12 the picture of a weasel which was of course a stoat!

Also in February we said a model aircraft we photographed at a model show was a Republic RF-84 of the French Air Force when it was an F-84R of the Italian Air Force.

We apologise for any distress we have caused.

The Citizen

Landscape of the Artist as a Young Man – Rembrandt

MARY ANN BIGHEAD

YES it's Glastonbury time again and it's time for us Glasto-goers to put on our green wellies, pitch our tents and hang out with some real genuine people.

And what a great bunch we are, us Glasto-goers – not your usual media-in-crowd from Notting Hill but authentic, down-to-earth people who want to chill out, let their attractive frizzy hair down and listen to some opera.

And that's what I love about gentle, generous Glasto – it's a world away from the frenzied Me-me-me generation who have taken over the rest of the country (I hate them, I'm sick of them and I want an alternative. That's my view and I'm sticking to it).

Here in the mud we all muck in selflessly helping each other out, lending each other our helicopters and advising each other which hotels to stay in when you've had enough of the tent.

And of course it's also a chance to see some of the great names – for example Jude and Siena were there last week just bumming around being photographed and chatting to anyone, no matter which newspaper they were from. That's the kind of place Glasto is – a place for free-thinking intelligent, attractive, like-minded people some of them with clever daughters. This year for example, my own 12-year-old, Brainella Bighead, has taken time off from being Regius Professor of History at Cambridge and advising NASA on rocket science to listen to the likes of Snowplay, Cold Patrol and Sir Paul McGallagher. (See her piece in tomorrow's Times which is nearly as brilliant as her mother's.)

The main thing however about Glasters is to get back to what us old hippies really stand for – peace and love, rock and roll, strawberries and cream, Pimms and croquet, money and fame.

For the shallow and self-obsessed, let me warn you, Royal Glasters is not a place to be *seen*. No, it's a place to write about in your column to demonstrate once again that even though you are immensely clever you are still young, attractive, hip and of course very clever.

© *Mary Ann Bighead*

SWINGING 60's
KINGS ROAD
ESTATE AGENTS
LOOKING BACK I THINK I SHOULD HAVE MADE WAR
MAKE LOVE NOT WAR
WELL, DAD, DID YOU MANAGE TO RID THE WORLD OF CAPITALIST BASTARDS?
I'M SORRY, SIR, I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND
PIG!
REMIND ME, WERE WE MARRIED BACK THEN?
GRANDFATHER! WILL YOU PLEASE TURN THAT RACKET DOWN!
NOW THESE ARE NOT FOR TRIPPING THEY'RE FOR YOUR CHOLESTEROL!
SHE LOVES YOU YEAH, YEAH, YEAH!

Nursery Times

Friday, 9 July, 2004

That Bob Dylan Honorary Degree Citation In Full

SALUTAMUS ROBERTUS DYLANUM (NATUM ZIMMERMANICUM) CANTORUM AMERICANUS FOLKERENSIS ET HARMONICA VIRTUOSUM. CELEBRATISSIMUS ANNOS SEXUAGENSIS CUM HITTO MAXIMO 'AVE HOMO TAMBURINUS', 'TEMPORES MUTANDO' ET NATURALITER 'RESPONSUS EST, AMICUS MEUS, PUFFERANDUM IN VENTO'. PER MULTOS ANNOS INSPIRATIO PROTESTORUM ANTI-BELLICUM ET ANTI-CAPITALISTICUM CUM AMICA JOANNES BAEZANTIUM ET CETERA. CONTINUIT CUM SADDO BARBATO ET CAPELLIBUS CURIOSIUS ET INHALANS MARIJUANUS ICONICUS ALTERNATIVUS CULTURUM HIPPIUSQUE. ACTORUS NON MEMORABILIS PERFORMENSIS IN 'PATRICIUS GARRETUS ET WILLIAMUS MINIMUS'. NUNC HABITUS EST IN CROUCHUS FINIS NON-DESCRIPTO SUBURBO LONDINIO. SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI.

© University of St Andrews (formerly The Glen Miller Distillery and Polytechnic, *"A wee dram afore ye graduate"*)

Those Prince Charles Accounts in Full

OUTGOINGS

Tastefully renovated palaces	**£7½ million**
Organic trousers	**£3.2 million**
Thingies	**£2.1 million**
Chappies + blokes who help out	**£3.7 million**
Little men from the village	**£4.2 million**
Toothpaste squeezer pursuivant	**£8.1 million**
Follies	**£2.3 million**
Islamic seed packets	**£27.35**
Multi-faith window cleaner	**£2.3 million**
Best of the Goons (boxed set)	**£13.99**
Mrs Parker Bowles toiletries	**£17.35 million**
	Total **£214 million**

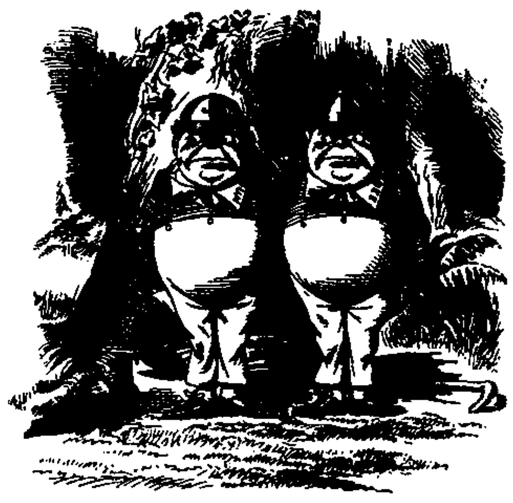
INCOME

Car-boot sales (Royal gifts)	**£1,234**
GM-free biscuits	**£2,207**
Watercolours (*Donkey by Moonlight*, 1982)	**£3.15**
	Total **£3,426**

VALUE TO NATION: MILLIONS OF JOKES

TWINS TO TAKE OVER FAMOUS NEWSPAPER

by Our Media Staff **Raymond Noddy** and **Stephen Glovepuppet**



NURSERYLAND was rocked to its foundations last night by the news that one of its most respected newspapers, the Daily Teddygraph, has been acquired by the reclusive Tweedle brothers, Sir Dum and Sir Dee.

Little is known of the brothers, except that they are identical twins and live in a fairytale castle on the island of Brilleau.

Barclay's Bank

Staff at the Daily Teddygraph were said to be 'delighted' by the news of their proprietors.

"The Tweedle brothers," said one staffer, "are model proprietors. They just stay quietly in their castle, without interfering, and from time to time send over large cheques for us all to live on."

Other insiders, however, are worried that the Tweedle brothers may wish to boost the circulation by changing the paper's traditional character.

Rumoured moves include the dropping of one of the Teddygraph's best-loved features, the regular printing of pictures of Miss Snow White attending premieres, wearing dresses which leave little to the imagination.

DUCK & FOX SPLIT – IT'S OFFICIAL

AFTER months of speculation surrounding their private life, Miss Jemima Puddleduck, it was revealed last night, has obtained a divorce from Mr Imran Fox.

Friends of the couple blame the breakdown of the relationship on their different life-styles and the "incompatibility of the duck and fox cultures".

Out for a Duck

Said one close friend, "it could never have worked. Jemima liked the social whirl of the farmyard, whereas Imran liked roaming the world attacking poultry and young lambs".

Recently Miss Puddleduck, daughter of the celebrated financier Sir James Puddleduck, has been squired around the farm by such eligible bachelors as Hugh Grunt, the handsome young pig, and the fish-about-town Mr A.A. Gill.

Jemima's mother, Lady Annabel Puddleduck, said last night that she was "very sad" at the break-up of her daughter's marriage.

"But I am sure she will get over it" Lady Annabel continued, "and next time she can do much better than a smelly old fox."

Who Should the World's Richest Duck Marry Next?

You decide. Should it be:
a. The Hon Jeremy Fisher?
b. Lord Peter Rabbit?
c. Sir Squirrel Nutkin?

Ring our 'Lovaduck' Hotline on 08742 620 620 and make your vote count (all calls charged at peak rates, one acorn a minute).

On Other Pages

- **Why won't Prince Charming marry the ugly sister?** by Linda Lee Potty

Exclusive to the Daily Telegraph

Bill Deedes A Very Unbrief Life

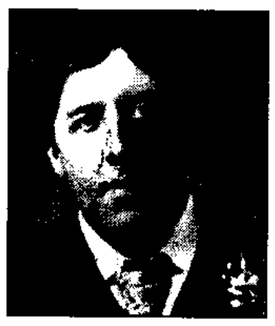
In which Britain's greatest living journalist remembers some of the famous people who have been lucky enough to meet him over the past six centuries.

NELL GWYNNE

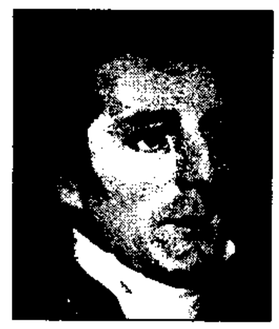
'Princess Nell, the Queen of Oranges', as she was known to the press corps, was one of the most beautiful women I have ever met. She revolutionised the stuffy court of King Charles with her gaiety, her informality and her genuine interest in other people's problems. I met her when I was interviewing her for the Daily Tudorgraph (as it was then), and even though it was more than 300 years ago, I still remember what she said to me, as if it was only yesterday: "Would you like some oranges, ducky?"

OSCAR WILDE

'Oscar the Master', as he was known to the press corps, was one of the wittiest men I have ever met. Oscar was wonderful company when he held court at the Cafe Royal, with his friends Lord Alfred Douglas, Algernon Swinburne and Aubrey Beardsley. It was not widely known that Oscar was a keen cricketer. He once confided in me, "Dear boy, did you know that I bat for the Other Side" – a team with which I was not familiar. Oscar spent his declining years in France, as a result, I am reliably informed, of his failing health. Typically, his dying words reflected the stylish way in which he had lived: "Very flat, this champagne, my dear. It must be from Norfolk".



THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON



Arthur Wellington was my commanding officer at the Battle of Waterloo, some years after I had been his fag at Eton (or it may have been Harrow). Wellington was a great soldier, but rather less successful as prime minister, a post in which I again served under him as Minister Without Portfolio. I remember him asking me one day, "Where have you left your portfolio, you damned fool?". At least, unlike his successor Sir Anthony Eden, in whose Cabinet I also served, the 'Iron Duke' did not wear yellow socks!

Tomorrow: *Lord Deedes remembers meeting Wat Tyler, Alexander the Great and W.G. Grace.*

1.

"Mobile phones reduce one's sperm count? How can using a mobile phone reduce one's sperm count?!!"

2.

EDEXCEL

A-Level 2004

MATHEMATICS

1 If A has two hundred pounds to spend and B has five hundred pounds to spend, and this exam paper is on sale for twice as much as the chemistry paper, but only two thirds of the cost of the biology paper, how many more times will student B be interviewed by police investigating the theft than student A?

(Answer: Yours for £50 – see you round the back of the bike-sheds in 5 minutes)

FRENCH CONNECTION UK FOUNDER IN £50M DIVORCE

DIARY

BILL CLINTON'S GOLFING DIARY

The more time I've spent partnering Beelzebub on the golf course, the more I've gotten to like him.

He's a smart guy, well-respected for his little red horns. A guy who's come through the burning ring of fire to cross many rivers, climb many mountains and ford many streams.

Sure, Bee-Bee's been vilified and traduced by the New Right. Once, they even claimed he had a forked tail. If so, he must keep it tucked into his pants – because I sure as hell have yet to see it!

To me, Beelzebub's just another victim of the right-wing conspiracy to blacken the name of anyone who's ever embarked on the long and winding road to make this country we all love everything it was meant to be.

Today, on the 3rd hole, Hillary hits a real beaut, clean onto the green.

Sadly, I drive my own ball deep into a bunker. Call me soft-hearted, but when I think no one is looking, I do what God intended. Lord knows, He has no wish to persecute a little ball. Why would He want to ruin the chances of a little bitty ball? I'm sorry, but I can't bear to see even the littlest ball sitting there, all alone, lost in the sand. So I pick up that little golf ball and I place it on the fairway. There are tears in my eyes.

"Bill!" It's Hillary. I didn't see her there, standing right behind me.

And she's furious. "Bill!" she yells. "What did you just do with that ball?"

"Which ball, Hillary?" I say.

Hillary looks at me as though I have punched her in the gut.

"Don't you go 'which-balling' me, Bill Clinton!" she replies. "Not when I saw you move that durn golf ball from the bunker with my own two eyes!"

At this point, I want to comfort her, as I have tried to comfort so many victims of forces beyond their own control. For all her formidable powers as a wife, mother and Senator, Hillary suffers from poor eyesight.

"Honey," I say, with feeling. "I don't care how much it costs, we've sure gotta get those eyes of yours sorted out."

"Did you or did you not move that golf ball?" she demands.

I look deep into her eyes. "I'll be honest, Hillary," I say. "I did not."

"But I took this Polaroid of you doing it, Bill," she says, brandishing it before me.

"But gee whizz, Hillary – that's exactly what I said," I say, "I told you I did not NOT move that golf ball. Believe me, honey – I'll do whatever I can to get those ears of yours treated, even if it breaks me."

We discuss the matter openly and honestly. Over the next few minutes, I come to realise I have issues with that golf ball. Issues that relate back to my childhood.

It pains me to face that fact that my childhood and the life I've led since growing up has made some things difficult for me that seem to come so naturally to other people.

It is time for the truth, however painful. I confess that as a small boy, not much more than ten years of age, I loved this great country of ours almost as much as I loved my own mother.

I never wanted to see my Mom hurt – not from a golf ball, not from a baseball, not from any spherical sports item.

So now, whenever I see a golf ball in a bunker, my first impulse is to place it on the grass, where it can be seen.

This incident on the 3rd hole, and the controversy it caused, is the latest casualty in my lifelong effort to lead a perfect life. Once again, I have become a victim of my own idealism, my own deep love of the underdog. Yes, it is hard, and it has been quite a journey, but thankfully I have deep reserves of courage and humility on which to draw in my lifelong mission to forgive myself.

By the 18th hole, Beelzebub and I are neck-and-neck with Hillary and her golf partner, our good friend Barbra Streisand. Barbra first introduced us to our good friend Bono, who is a good friend of my good friend Helmut Kohl, who admires me greatly.

I am not competitive. In fact, no one comes near me in being uncompetitive. But we have to find some way of beating Hillary and Barbra, that's for sure.

"Say, Bill – how'd you like a hole-in-one?" Beelzebub whispers as I prepare to tee off. "All I'd need in return is your soul."

Weightily, I ponder the difficult decision for some moments.

"Sure sounds good to me, Bub," I reply. We shake on this historic deal, a deal that will, I know, do so much to reduce the pain and suffering of many millions of my fellow Americans.

I place the ball on the tee and swing the club. It's a perfect stroke. That ball sails through the air with all the dignity and strength of those very first pioneering Americans as they set out from Plymouth, England, sailing across that stormy ocean in search of their land of dreams and hope. And – yes! it drops straight into the hole.

My team has won! I want to holler, "Yi-yi-yippee-yippee-yi!" But my first thought is to comfort Hillary. That has always been my first thought, whenever circumstances have encouraged me to cause her distress.

But as I move to hug her, Beelzebub pulls me over to one side. "Don't forget about your soul, Bill!" he winks.

"Soul?" I say, with a winning smile.

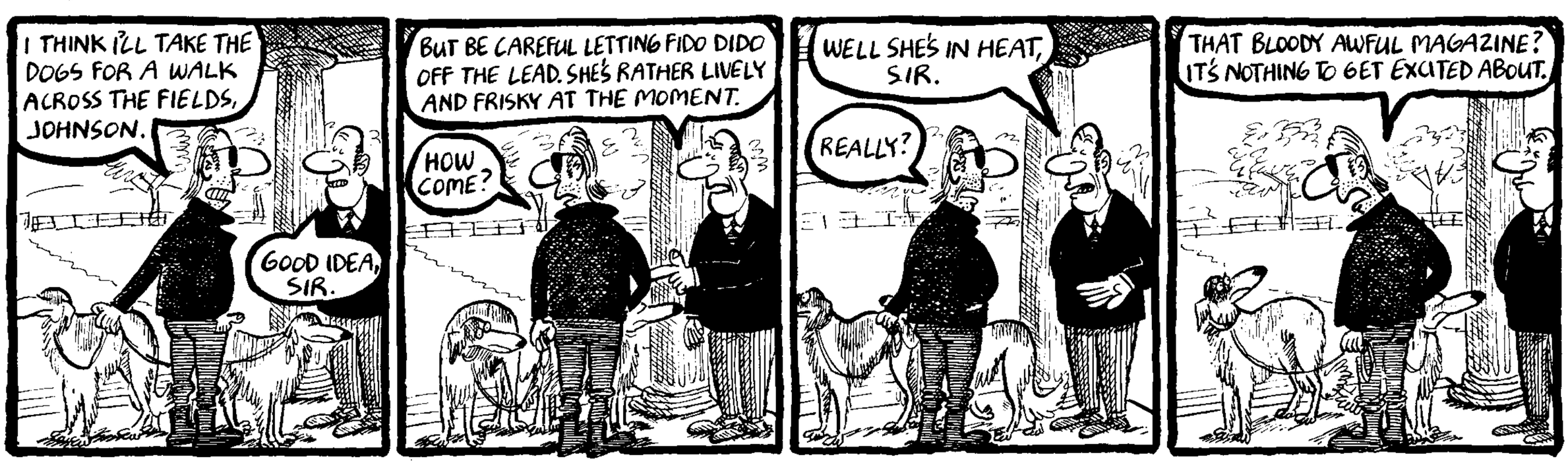
"Mine for all eternity," he says.

"Sure sounds good to me!" I say, sharing a double-five with that great guy.

I have always appreciated the wailing and gnashing of teeth. Now I shall be given the opportunity to do some wailing and gnashing of my own. This is great news, not only for myself and my family, but for all my fellow Americans.

Our nation has indeed come a long way since our ancestors first arose on that African savannah more than a hundred thousand years ago. Now, we may all look forward with unquenchable optimism to marching shoulder-to-shoulder into the fires of damnation, humming as we go.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN


I THINK I'LL TAKE THE DOGS FOR A WALK ACROSS THE FIELDS, JOHNSON.
GOOD IDEA, SIR.
BUT BE CAREFUL LETTING FIDO DIDO OFF THE LEAD. SHE'S RATHER LIVELY AND FRISKY AT THE MOMENT.
HOW COME?
WELL SHE'S IN HEAT, SIR.
REALLY?
THAT BLOODY AWFUL MAGAZINE? IT'S NOTHING TO GET EXCITED ABOUT.

Literary Review

Gazza job

Gazza: My Story
Paul Gascoigne
(Headline, £18.99)

I especially like it in hospital when they give you morphine…

PAUL Gascoigne's autobiography? Step right this way, sir, help yourself to the complimentary champagne, enjoy Mr Chris Evans' DJ-ing selection, and don't be surprised if all the pies have already been eaten. But first some context.

Getting on for 50 years ago the then Wolverhampton Wanderers and England captain Billy Wright, then in the process of amassing 105 caps in his country's service, published a book. *Football Is My Passport* is a modest little work, presumably compiled with the help of some friendly sports journalist but with only the featured Corinthian's name on the title page, distressingly unrevelatory, good natured and confining its observations to a single subject: football. Great matches I played in, and what I thought of Puskas when the Hungarians thrashed England 6-3 at Wembley in 1953.

Here, on the other hand, is an artefact billed as *Gazza: My Story*. It is not, in point of fact, Gazza's story but a version of that unhappy chronicle filtered through the mediating consciousness of our man's amanuensis Hunter Davies (more of this anon). Neither is it particularly about football. It is, on the other hand, one of the saddest books about a professional sportsman ever brought to the booksellers' tables.

George Best? Repetition has dulled the allure of those confessions. Tony Adams? Could take care of himself when it mattered. But Gazza? Oh dear me no. The exhibitionist tendencies innocently paraded on the football pitch have now been sorrowfully unravelled in print and the result is approximately as depressing as one of George Gissing's novels of late-Victorian slum life, in which everyone is dying of consumption, the blacking factory closes and the thump of the landlord's iron-shod boots can be heard eternally on the tenement stair.

It goes like this. You are the preposterously gifted footballing scion of a sprawling and impoverished Geordie clan resident in Gateshead. You never had any money and you never went on holiday, except for day-trips to Whitley Bay. A glint of radium is occasionally extracted from the surrounding pitch when Mam wins groceries at the bingo ("Even today I prefer beans on toast to caviar or fillet steak" – *of course*). Eventually – well, not eventually, for this is fairly meteoric rise – you hit the big time, play for England, are sold for two million quid in your early twenties, burst into tears in the 1990 world cup semi-final and inexplicably find yourself at the epicentre of a media storm called "Gazzamania".

After which it all goes wrong. You meet Chris, Danny and the other sharks, get injured a lot, beat up Shel and suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder. At 37 you realise you have squandered around £8m and are still traumatised by the death of the small boy who ran out into the road while in your ten-year-old care.

One of *Gazza: My Story's* distinguishing factors is its ability to combine genuine poignancy with the clichés common to all sporting literature. Never mind the preliminary chart of our man's career ("Took cocaine… Broke arm, two operations… Priory", etc), this is the kind of book in which the hero really does go back to school to confront the previously unimpressionable geography teacher with evidence of his success.

For this, no doubt, we can thank Mr Davies whose thumb-print lies all over the work. Anyone wanting a bit of fun – possibly the only fun to be vouchsafed here – can start by taking a page at random and trying to establish which bits are Gazza's original ruminations from the tape and which are Hunter's aesthetic glosses.

I was very suspicious, for example, when Paul began to talk about the entity known as "young people", or advised his actress sister Anna to "look no further" or affected to compare an incident before an England game in Albania to a scene in Hitchcock's *The Birds*. Best of all is a passage in which Paul, recalling his intervention in some impending sibling divorce, observes that "I know from my own experience how emotionally destructive marital strife can be". Ten out of ten for that one, Hunter!

The lesson to be drawn is, of course, that elemental one about impoverishment: in this case cultural as much as economic. Tenderly handled by Mr D, our man bears no grudges (except for Glenn Hoddle, who threw him out of the England team) gives money to charity, is neither resentful nor avaricious (the eternal refrain "I paid for everything" is not vainglory but the mark of duty done) and clearly has no idea how to occupy himself when not playing football, which he has now ceased to do.

Half a century on from William Ambrose Wright, the thought that professional footballers are not much more than circus animals being put through their tricks in a general atmosphere of supercilious patronage is rather too strong for comfort.

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, Pt 94

Anthony Powell: A Life
Michael Barber
(Duckworth, £20)

…It was at this point, with his magnum opus complete, that Powell began work on his four-volume sequence of memoirs, *To Keep the Pot Boiling*. As he came to complete the second instalment, *Some Frightfully Amusing People One Has Known* (the opening volume, *Eton Ramblings*, had been described by Hugh Massingberd in the *Daily Telegraph* as "the most agreeable portrait of C.M. Frobisher's house yet committed to paper") he was interrupted by controversy when the *Times* printed a letter from the Hon Algernon Dymme, with whom Powell had messed at Eton, alleging that his fictional anti-hero, Kenneth Widdington, was modelled on Lord Dull, Minister of Fisheries in the Attlee government. Powell's response to these accusations showed him at his most Delphic. "The most frightfully tedious thing about these dreadful bores who come to see me," he remarked, "is that they all sort of assume that one simply puts into the books all the people that one knows. And if you take the trouble to investigate, which of course scarcely anyone does these days, you'll find that Lord Dull, unlike Widdington, is actually left-handed and married to a Marquis's daughter rather than an Earl's divorced wife…"

…It was at this time that I persuaded Powell to grant me an interview at his agreeable Somersetshire residence. The entry in his *Journals* describing this encounter strikes a characteristic note: "Really frightful character called Barber came to talk to me for some publication of which I did not catch the name. Spent the rest of the afternoon reading *Debrett*, subsequently being joined at tea by Sylvia Farquahar-Fitzlightly (nee Kent-Cumberland/Ashkenazy/Twistlet on-Trevelyan), V's cousin through her Delacourt-Delingpole connection, tho' *Debrett* untypically ambiguous on this point…" [*continues*]

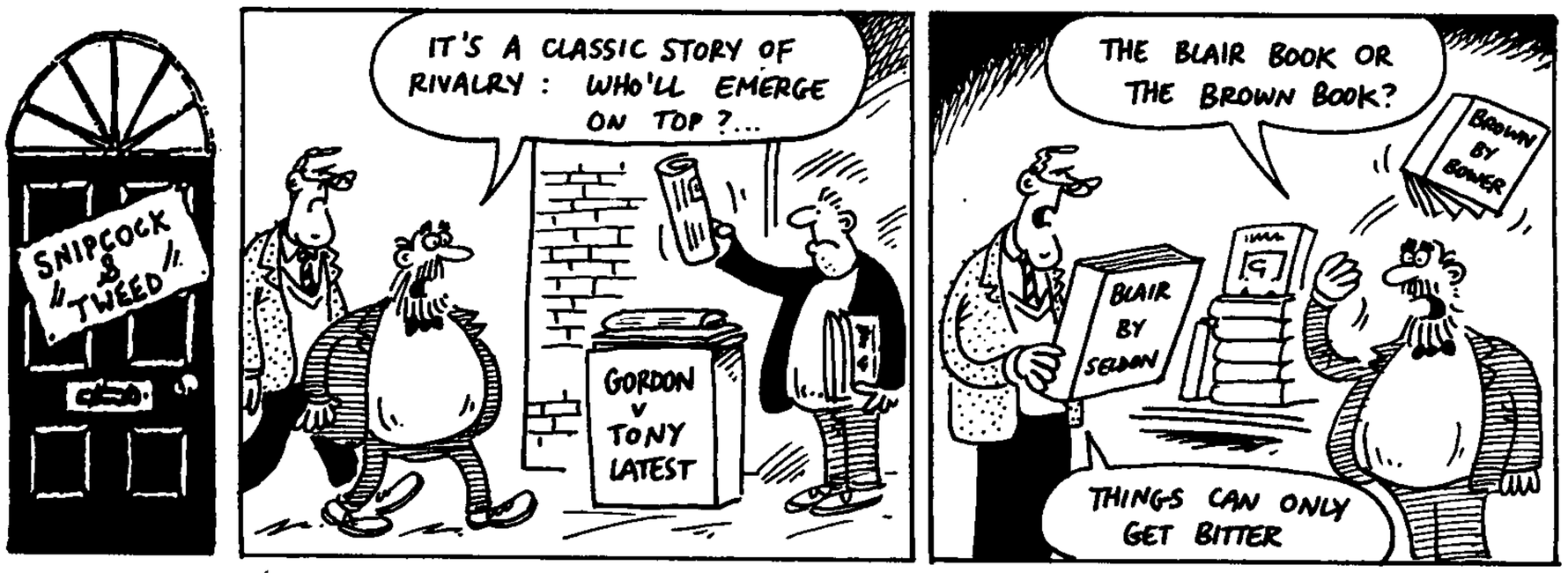
BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ UNHAPPY times at Penguin, which is still paying through the nose for its prestigious HQ on the Strand, with a knock-on effect on commissioning budgets at the lower end of the scale.

Although bread and butter activities have been squeezed, the circuses continue at the other end of the scale – with disastrous results. The £800,000 or so paid to BBC war correspondent Rageh Omaar for his *Revolution Day* has resulted in woeful sales of just 25,000 so far. How can the second book of the deal begin to recoup this massive figure?

Worst of all has been the implosion of the company's distribution system following closure of the long-serving warehouse at Harmondsworth at a cost of around £25m. As a result of inadequate testing, the computer systems at the new, automated centre in Rugby fell over the moment it went into service.

The new set-up doesn't allow


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
IT'S A CLASSIC STORY OF RIVALRY : WHO'LL EMERGE ON TOP ?...
GORDON v TONY LATEST
THE BLAIR BOOK OR THE BROWN BOOK?
BLAIR BY SELDON
BROWN BY BOWER
THINGS CAN ONLY GET BITTER

staff to get pallets out manually, so a temporary warehouse has been set up in a marquee in the car park, staffed by some of those who were made redundant from Harmondsworth, to ensure continuing supply of 1,000 key titles. Penguin MD Tom Weldon has been to see agents Curtis Brown, AP Watt and Peters, Fraser and Dunlop to explain the cock-up and, presumably, to reassure them that their authors' books will get to the shops somehow and that they will continue to get paid.

A similar cap-wringing exercise for booksellers should be on the cards. And perhaps Penguin should rethink its recent announcement that its catalogues will in future only be available online.

■ THE sudden demise of Marlon Brando prompted a swift turnaround by the *Daily Mail*, which swiftly forgot its complaint that "the 80-year-old actor has been reduced to hiding his Oscars to prevent seizure by creditors... taxpayers are having to pay for the education of his autistic ten-year-old son" (1 July) and instead feted him as the "last of the screen gods" (3 July).

The *Mail*'s claims were taken from a new biography, *Brando in Twilight*, which is apparently slated to appear this autumn – though actual evidence of its existence is rather harder to track down.

The *Mail* had simply lifted the story from one of the dozens of US papers which ran it during the preceding week, all crediting "Los Angeles author Patricia Ruiz" with some extraordinary claims about the reclusive actor's private life – though they were all rather vague about who exactly Ruiz was, and who would be publishing her book.

This was because, as they all happily admitted, they had lifted the story from the ever-reliable *Sunday Times*, whose LA correspondent John Harlow filed an exclusive on the actor's "£11m debt apocalypse" on 27 June — the only information he could offer being that Ruiz was "not directly related" to Cristina Ruiz, Brando's ex-lover who sued him for palimony two years ago.

Oddly, *Brando in Twilight* does not appear on any American bookstore's pre-order systems, and Ruiz does not appear to have ever had anything else – books, journalism, anything – published. No doubt none of this will stop her claims, and worse, being repeated in the slew of cash-in biographies that are now bound to appear in the next few months...

■ *NEWS that veteran novelist Ray Bradbury objected to filmmaker Michael Moore's reference to his book* Fahrenheit 451 *in the title of his latest anti-Bush tirade,* Fahrenheit 9/11, *made headlines on both sides of the Atlantic.*

"I could write a novel tomorrow called Gone With The Wind, couldn't I? But I'm not going to do it, 'cause it would be dishonest," raged the 83-year-old author of Beyond 1984 *and* Another Tale of Two Cities. *"Michael Moore is a dishonest man and I want to have nothing to do with him."*

What Bradbury failed to mention is that a new film of Fahrenheit 451 *is currently in production, and that distributors may now be forced to change its title to avoid audience confusion.*

■ A NEW rough guide to being arrested, *No Comment: The defendant's guide to arrest*, will have Metropolitan police tearing their hair out. The booklet recommends answering no police questions at all, and contains advice such as: "In the police station the cops rely on people's naivety. If you are aware of the tricks they play, the chances are they'll give up on you."

The most embarrasing thing for the Met, however, is that production costs for the booklet were covered by more than £80,000 paid out as damages to a group of anti-monarchy protesters earlier this year by... the Metropolitan police.

■ *THE* Times *has been making heavy weather of literary quotations.*

On 25 June in T2, Jane Shilling wrote that: "Ruskin winsomely reckoned that there was no such thing as bad weather." Then, just a few pages later, Caitlin Moran observed that: "Glastonbury is one of the greatest illustrations of George Bernard Shaw's assertion that there's no such thing as bad weather."

Great minds clearly think alike, though not, as it happens, Ruskin and Shaw.

'Bookworm'

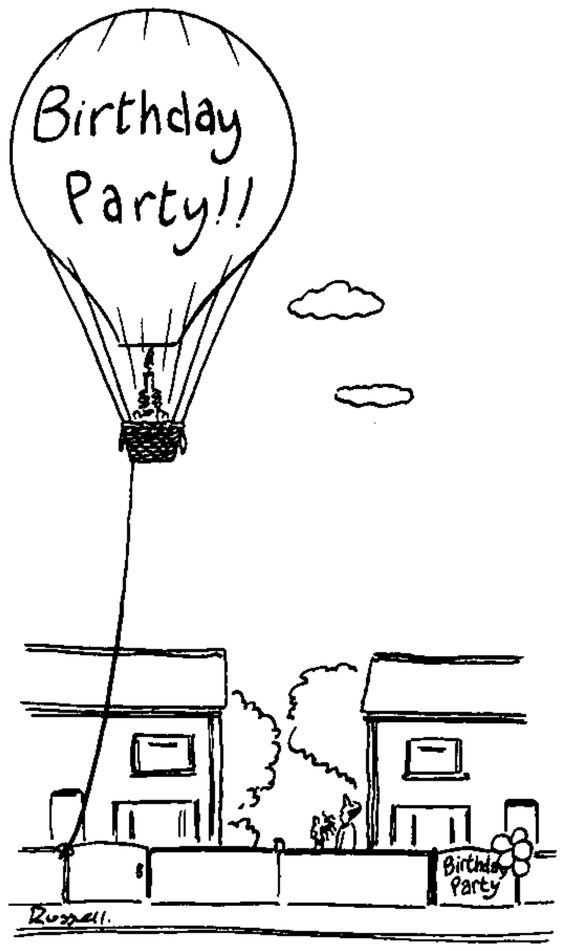
LIBRARY NEWS

■ "OUR public library service should be a testbed for the public sector reform and modernisation which is at the centre of our wider government policy" – words to terrify librarians and readers everywhere, from culture secretary Tessa Jowell last month.

It might therefore come as some relief to know that the initiative she was launching – with the cringeworthy title of "Lend it Like Peckham" – is actually singularly unambitious.

A generous, er, £2m will be provided to help less-successful library services and provide leadership training for all library services. Given the number of failing public libraries nationally, that money will be thinly spread.

The award-winning Peckham Library, in the London borough of Southwark, is reckoned a success with its 40,000 visitors a year. But that level of borrowing came with a pricetag of £5m for just one library in 2000.



"Bloody Joneses"

O·B·N

The best holiday read this summer is unfortunately published in September. Boris Johnson's novel *Seventy Two Virgins* is what I had previously considered oxymoronic, a comic thriller. A bicycling MP who fears that he is about to be exposed by the newspapers for a sexual scandal gets caught up in an al-Qa'eda plot against an American president. It is an effortlessly brilliant page-turner. Boris is a jack of all trades and a master of them.

SARAH SANDS
Daily Telegraph

Submitted by Neil Ryan

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

Pseuds Corner

Wayne Rooney has a message for the French that is almost Nelsonian in its brevity and understated impact. Today in the biggest game of his career, he is going to do his best.

PAUL WILSON
Observer

Look at football worship. All those people gathered in an unroofed stadium [is] not unlike what must have gone on in pagan sanctuaries. The goalkeeper is the ultimate shaman, guarding the gates to the underground, wearing the No.1 jersey in a different colour and not seeming to be part of the team. We've never lost it. Modern beliefs that we are at the tailend of a culture that is killing itself is just bollocks.

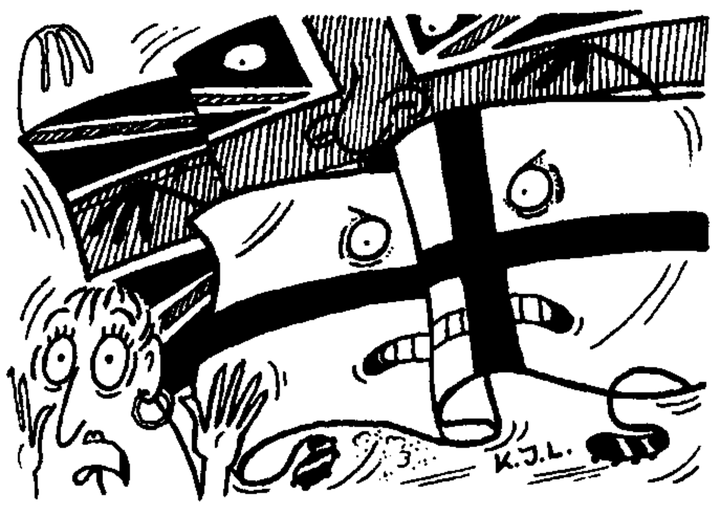
JULIAN COPE
Guardian

Struggles with manuscripts and proofs, urgent demands from editors and publishers and, let us admit it, the lure of exotic parties have prevented me from going down to Somerset much in recent weeks.

PAUL JOHNSON
Spectator

I experimented with it [television] for a year but found it intrusive, especially the BBC news presentation. The signature tune was E major. Such a special key, reserved for works like Bruckner's Seventh Symphony and Beethoven's Opus 109 Sonata.

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES
Guardian



To me the union flag is an ugly, angular, inaccessible, frightening design, but I find the flag of St George much more hostile. There's something about the thinness of the cross itself that reminds me of a trickle of blood, for one.

CLARE GORHAM
Guardian

The A13 is an archetype of road space, the in-between territory of habitation and movement that can be found in every modern city, from Tokyo to Lagos to Los Angeles. It is unique. It brings together an ancient history of Romans, Saxons and Normans, with a contemporary landscape of displaced gangland, massive industrial interventions, and what [Iain] Sinclair calls "aspirant Americana".

The exhibition will present the A13 as the singular archetype of a universal condition, of something so familiar that we no longer notice it, yet secretly extraordinary.

Flyer advertising A13 – A multidisciplinary exhibition on an urban archetype, showing at The Wapping Project.

Pseuds Corporate

The use of block colours gives synergy to the unique Italian design to offer timeless aesthetic appeal to make the shirt the most stylish on the market.

Tottenham Hotspur F.C.'s web-site on the new home kit

CONTRIBUTORS: Strobes, Sarah Montgomery, Paul Ryan, Rollo Webb, Lauza Dawkins, John Goodwin, Clem Boden.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

DIEGO GARCIA

DROP OFF IN THE OCEAN

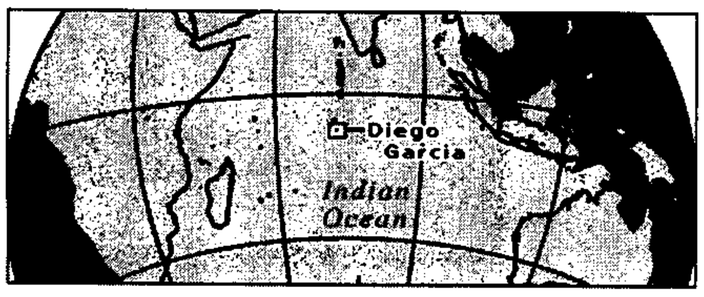
WHY has the British government overturned a high court decision to allow 4,000 displaced inhabitants of Diego Garcia to return home? The volte-face comes as worrying questions are being asked about goings-on at this remote but strategic US military base on "British" territory.

The island of Diego Garcia is part of the British Indian Ocean Territory, or BIOT; and for 30 years its inhabitants, the Ilois, have languished in the slums of Port Louis, Mauritius. They were chucked out on the orders of Lord Chalfont back in Harold Wilson's day to make way for the largest American air and naval support facility outside Pearl Harbor.

Their expulsion angered many people, not least a young Robin Cook, who later took on the islanders' case believing a "final compensation" deal of around £2,000 per islander was inadequate. But the row still rages today along with a continuing compensation case which is partly being fought on the government's behalf by Rhodri Thompson QC of Matrix Chambers – a practice that includes Cherie Booth QC and that was partly set up to champion human rights (*sic*).

When Cook eventually became "new" Labour's first ethical foreign secretary, he accepted a high court ruling in 2000 that the islanders should be allowed to return home. He told parliament: "We will put in place a new immigration ordinance, which will allow the Ilois to return to the outer islands while observing our treaty obligations (to America)."

Cook also ordered a feasibility study into resettling the Ilois. But after three years of silence over



the study, the privy council recently met in London and passed an "order in council" prepared by the government. It contradicted both the high court decision of 2000 and sought to reverse Cook's immigration ordinance, declaring that "no person has the right of abode in the territory". According to Richard Gifford, the solicitor representing the Ilois in London, this exercise of the Queen's prerogative power is "totally lacking in any democratic procedure, and was no doubt chosen for this very reason".

The privy council ruling was released on the day Britain went to the polls last month and it was left to junior foreign office minister Bill Rammell to trot out the "thinking" behind it and the resettlement feasibility study. "The costs of maintaining long term inhabitation are likely to be prohibitive," he said. But the study was not "tasked with investigating the financial costs and benefits of resettlement..."

Rammell also claimed that "human interference with the atolls... will accelerate the effects of global warming". But the report said: "At the present time it is not possible to quantify the risk associated with climate change." As Gifford says: "Until the US military decides to pack up and go, you will forgive the Ilois for believing that they are again being cheated out of their homeland by inaccurate pretext".

So why a sudden change in policy, formulated in secret without recourse to parliament?

The strategic importance of Diego Garcia, one of 65 BIOT islands, has increased dramatically since 11 September, particularly as a base for the long-range bombers which were able to hit targets in Iraq from the base.

What is also certain is the need for secrecy: not least, say campaigners in Mauritius, surrounding Diego Garcia's newly-constructed "Camp Justice" which, it is feared by some, may be used by the Americans for Guantanamo Bay-style detentions.

This fear was fuelled when BBC Radio 4 reporter Jon Manel recently investigated the growing concern of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) into America's high-profile "ghost prisoners" whose whereabouts remains a mystery. Twenty two such prisoners appear on the FBI's list of "most wanted" and the former head of the CIA's counter terrorism operations, Vincent Cannistraro, believes that some of the "ghost prisoners" have been taken to Diego Garcia.

The British foreign office has told MPs and peers: "The US authorities have repeatedly assured us that claims that suspects are being held, or have been held or interrogated on the island, or on any vessel anchored there, are unfounded." But the ICRC has now requested access to the island and "Camp Justice". The camp may be an extension of facilities for the 6,000 or so military personnel on the island... or it may not.

POWER CUTS

Kept in the dark

NEARLY 10 months after two electricity failures blacked out large parts of London and the Midlands, the department of trade and industry has at last published its report.

The 25-page document, called *Resilience* (sic) *of the National Electricity Network*, is an attempt to answer criticism from the Commons trade and industry select committee – not least about the ridiculous length of time it is (still) taking to say publicly what really went wrong.

The select committee observed: "If it takes nine months to reach conclusions on relatively limited disruptions, how long would it take to investigate and implement any changes required in the event of larger-scale incidents?"

"Larger-scale incidents" mean "cascade tripping" – or, more colloquially, one damn thing after another, as happened last year in the US, Canada, Sweden, Denmark and Italy where many millions were blacked out.

Britain is not in that category yet. Last summer's black-out affected a mere 670,000 customers in south London and the Midlands; although if this summer is hot and people use a lot more air conditioning, worse could happen.

The DTI does not disclose what its inquiry has concluded; but its defence makes it plain that "a balance needs to be struck between the benefits to current consumers through lower prices and future consumers through funding for higher investment and maintenance". In other words money – the need to cut investment in infrastructure to keep prices down – is the crunch issue. "Current consumers", as we are called, are perhaps lucky the Grid was built when service to the public rather than shareholder profit was the main consideration.

The DTI document includes a response from OFGEM (the office of gas and electricity markets, which is supposed to be independent); and rejects a statement by the MPs that the penalties it can impose on the transmission companies are "draconian". Whether they are called draconian or not, the penalties can be as high as 10 percent of a company's turnover, which would not be an insignificant item in anyone's accounts, particularly at a time when OFGEM is hoping to raise £5bn by selling off parts of its gas network. In anticipation of the coming uproar, four of the top people on National Grid Transco, which owns the Grid, have had their annual bonuses cut, though their annual take-home pay still ranged from £600,000 to just over £1m. Not bad for the company that produced operation cock-up.

The electricity establishment is clearly on the defensive and in no hurry to publish the report on one of the first disasters to hit the privatised Grid. The document says that Sir John Mogg, OFGEM chairman, told the select committee that its review would not be ready until the middle of this year. That is now.

OIL

Screwed for crude

ARMED police, helicopters and special forces are being used against villagers protesting along the route of an oil pipeline described by the UK's export credit guarantee department (ECGD) as a model for future international business projects.

The $3.4bn Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline (*Eyes passim*) running through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, is two-thirds built. When it is completed the BP-led BTC consortium will be able to transport a million barrels of crude oil each day from the Caspian oil fields.

In the Georgian village of Krtsanisi, riot police recently broke up a demonstration by 60 residents and arrested four as they protested at the fact that they will not be compensated for their leased common land across which the pipeline is to be built. In another Georgian village, Dgvari, 120 residents are filing a complaint with the World Bank saying the pipeline puts their homes in danger from landslides.

In Turkey one of the main campaigners against the pipeline, Ferhat Kaya, spent most of May in prison after he was arrested while documenting the case of an individual whose land is being used for the pipeline but has not been compensated. Kurdish Human Rights campaigners have complained about Mr Kaya's treatment by police, saying his injuries were consistent with torture. Mr Kaya was previously imprisoned for six months in 2002 for referring to Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan at a public meeting with the title "Mr" – which was seen as implying support.

Meanwhile in Azerbaijan the chairman of the state special guard service announced that the 700 guards for the Azeri stretch of pipeline would be supplied with up-to-date guns and new helicopters by the end of June.

UK taxpayers have provided $150m of the funding for the pipeline through the ECGD, as well as additional funding through the World Bank, even though an international coalition of environment and human rights campaign groups, including the UK's Friends of the Earth and the Kurdish Human Rights Project, compiled a dossier citing 173 violations of the World Bank's own social and environmental criteria by the pipeline.

John Weiss, acting chief executive of the ECGD, told a recent hearing of the trade and industry select committee that they were still happy with the decision to back the pipeline. "I think the way we handled BTC is an indication of how it is going to be in the future," he said.

GOOD NEWS SPECIAL

Cliveden coup

CAMPAIGNERS trying to block a 191-home estate on land the National Trust was supposed to protect for the nation (*Eyes passim*) were taken aback by the ease of their victory in the planning process.

After months of wrangling within the National Trust – including a close-run agm vote on the issue – and a bitter row between the trust and objectors from Taplow parish council and the Council for the Protection of Rural England, South Bucks council's planning committee unexpectedly bucked the recommendations of its planning officers to throw out the plan.

It did, however, grant permission for a 135-home retirement scheme, which local people would be slightly happier with since it would not put so much pressure on local roads. The plans will still have to go to the secretary of state, since the Government Office for the South East has put a special order on the site, designed to prevent the council granting permission for the bigger scheme.

Viscount Astor handed over the estate to the trust in 1942 saying: "I have given up on my behalf and on behalf of future owners the right of converting it into a speculators' building estate."

PFI

Communication breakdown

THE prize for the greatest cock-up in the grim history of the private finance initiative (PFI) is keenly contested. But for the moment it must go to the brains who run GCHQ, the country's top secret security headquarters in Cheltenham.

The House of Commons public accounts committee (PAC) report on the new building for GCHQ, published on 15 June, sets out the basic facts.

In 1998 the government picked a "preferred bidder" to build a new headquarters for the eavesdroppers. The lucky consortium was IAS, comprised mainly of the *Eye*'s old chums Carillion (formerly Tarmac) and Group 4. The consortium bid £404m and the nearest rival bid was £493m, making the IAS bid easily the cheapest. *Whoops!* When the contract was signed with IAS 21 months later (during which time there was little or no competition) the cost was £489m – indistinguishable from the rival bid.

There was an additional cost for moving equipment from the old building into the new one. This was estimated at £41m. *Whoops!* Somehow this estimate got written down as £20m. No one could explain the 100 per cent error.

This relatively small sum for removals (£41m) was calculated on the basis that the equipment could be put into boxes and shifted. *Whoops!* The GCHQ boffins discovered that their kit was highly complex. The "box move" had to be replaced with something more sophisticated. The move actually cost £450m – more than 10 times the original estimate.

Who pays for these vast errors? The taxpayer, mostly. Confronted with the "revised budget of £308m over the first five years", the treasury generously agreed to lob in another £216m over the original budget. To close the still yawning gap, GCHQ had to keep its existing site open until 2012, costing the taxpayer an extra £43m.

What about IAS? It earned a bonus of over £2m for completing the building on time. There were several last-minute "faults to be rectified" but, as the PAC report said, "GCHQ could not force IAS to incorporate its contract changes without putting the achievement of the IAS bonus at risk".

As with all PFI contracts, the government worked out a "public sector comparator", which was as usual conveniently higher than the PFI bid. *Whoops again!* The "comparator" was boosted by about £200m mainly on the basis of a treasury calculation of how much a similar public sector contract might have overrun its estimate. Without the extra £200m, the comparator would have been cheaper than the PFI. When Sir David Omand, permanent secretary and security and intelligence coordinator at the cabinet office, and Dr David Pepper, GCHQ director, gave evidence about this to the PAC last year, Labour MP Jon Trickett concluded that "the public sector comparator figure was fiddled" by "you and your fellow-conspirators at the treasury" who were ideologically committed to PFI whether it was cheaper or not. The committee concluded: "The public sector comparator figures could be used to demonstrate any result required".

The best summary of the GCHQ disaster came from Alan Williams MP: "The reality is that there has been a major mess-up here and everyone is trying to duck for cover and no-one is going to accept responsibility. Did anyone eventually get reprimanded for the failures of the early days when everything was grossly underestimated, or did not anything happen to anyone?" Sir David Omand replied: "I can certainly assure you that my predecessor as principal accounting officer made it very plain indeed to the then director and his team that the increase in costs was unacceptable." So that's all right than.

PRIVATISATION

Unholy alliance

FORMER Labour health secretary Alan Milburn and top Tory Malcolm Rifkind have come together to make money out of NHS privatisation.

Milburn is paid up to £30,000 as an adviser to investment firm Bridgepoint Capital, whose health interests include ownership of Alliance Medical, a company chaired by Malcolm Rifkind.

Milburn took the job in March and in April his replacement as health secretary, John Reid, announced he was tendering for 80,000 scans a year by mobile MRI units for the NHS. By June junior health minister John Hutton had announced that Alliance Medical had won the contract.

The advisory committee on business appointments, which polices ex-ministers' jobs, told Milburn he could take up his new job "forthwith but for one year after leaving office he could not be personally involved in lobbying any government ministers or officials". Milburn left government in June 2003 so has been free to lobby since last month.

The department of health was keen to emphasise what a good deal Alliance Medical is offering: because its undercuts the NHS cost for scans, the firm will provide more scans – up to 130,000 a year – over its five-year contract. However, because Alliance Medical owns the scanners and employs the radiologists and operators, the deal will not help the NHS build capacity. Instead the NHS will become more reliant on private firms.

Board rigid?

WHEN foundation hospitals were first mooted, the press reported a furious cabinet row between the then health secretary Alan Milburn and chancellor Gordon Brown.

Milburn was supposedly the prime mover in the Blair-Brown battle for Labour's soul, while Gordon fretted that foundation hospitals would float free of government control.

As a compromise, a regulator for the new hospitals was appointed. But any idea that the regulator will impose "old" Labour values on foundation hospitals and restrict their further privatisation of the NHS was killed off in current health secretary John Reid's June appointments to the board that will advise the independent regulator of foundation trusts.

The new members are: Dr Penelope Dash, a "health consultant" who has worked for Labour's favourite US health firm Kaiser Permanente, as well as McKinsey Management Consultants, and who recently wrote an article in the *British Medical Journal* celebrating NHS privatisation; Kate Nealon, a director of HBOS Bank (the merger between the Halifax and the Bank of Scotland) who trained as a lawyer in the US; and Chris Mellor, the retired chief executive of the privatised Anglian Water.

Mellor left Anglian with a £1.2m compensation package and a £487,000 salary (including a £150,000 bonus) having been fired by the board after his strategy of "diversifying" away from the boring pumping of water into exciting new "services" saw the company hit a crisis. His pay-off was widely decried as a reward for failure.

Now, however, Mellor and Co will advise the foundation hospital regulator Bill Moyes, who was a civil servant in the Scottish Office who worked on NHS PFI deals in the 1990s. Moyes left the SO to work for the British Linen Bank, a subsidiary of the Bank of Scotland that funded NHS PFIs in Scotland.

MMR

Triple trouble

THE 300 families seeking to sue manufacturers of the MMR vaccine over a range of disabling conditions other than autism – they include epilepsy, encephalitis, the paralysing Guillain-Barre syndrome and childhood arthritis – have, like other MMR parents, been thwarted by having their legal aid cancelled (*Eyes passim*).

Even though some of the conditions complained of are acknowledged as rare side-effects of the vaccine, and others were associated with an early MMR vaccine that was withdrawn in 1992 by the government because it caused mumps-meningitis, it seems the legal services commission (LSC) has made a generalised ruling not to continue to support any of these cases either.

Each family has responded in detail to the LSC's requests to "show cause" why their child's case should continue, but their legal aid certificates were nevertheless cancelled at the end of last month because the LSC claimed "there was no reasonable prospect of success".

The LSC seems to want it both ways. A statement from the commission said that as the non-autism and bowel disease cases were part of the MMR litigation group, they were linked to the success or failure of the group as a whole. While on the other hand it maintained that "all the responses received were considered individually".

When some of the families sought written reasons in order to appeal, they were told that a general decision had been taken by the multi-party action committee and no written reasons were available, making something of a mockery of the entire process.

Withdrawal of legal aid leaves the families in a precarious position. Next month there is a progress hearing in the high court into the stalled legal action. Not only do the families no longer have legal representation and face the costs of appearing at court in person, but they are also now at risk of having to pay the drug companies' court costs too. As *Eye* readers will recall, Lovells, the solicitors acting for Merck, one of the three defendant vaccine manufacturers, have already been accused of wrongly forcing parents to sign away any future rights to sue by threatening them with a huge bill for costs.

While the stalling of the legal action has muted debate over MMR in Britain, in the US vaccine safety is high on both the political and news agenda. A new US study, published in the *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons*, is the latest in a series from Andrew Wakefield, the gastroenterologist at the centre of the MMR controversy. It shows measles virus in the spinal fluid, as well as in the guts of children with autism. He and fellow author Dr Jeff Bradstreet argue that the presence of the virus at two sites suggests evidence of active replication of virus and they are calling for more research into any relationship between persistent measles virus infection and regressive autism.

Number crunchings

Number 30,000

- Jump in national employment figures in last quarter proudly announced by Department for Work and Pensions in June
- Number of staff in Department for Work and Pensions who will lose their jobs as part of "modernisation" announced in June

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

THOSE who wish to enter the Temple of Mammon, otherwise known as the City, to follow the teachings of its all-powerful financial services cult and worship at the altar of their idol Greed are asked to pass stringent tests designed to assess their suitability. This year's examination currently being set by the financial services authority (FSA) invigilators is the Marks & Spencer multiple choice.

Question One

Stuart Rose is the multi-millionaire former chief executive of Arcadia, Argos and Booker. Rose receives a telephone call from his old pal, the FUKU retailer Philip Green who made him an offer he could not refuse in 2002 to sell the Top Shop chain, thereby substantially boosting the Rose bank balance. Green wants to meet but does not say exactly why. Rose agrees but then cancels the 3 May meeting. Green is persistent. He calls again on 7 May to set a new date in five days' time. By now there is a lot of City chatter that Green is again going to bid for the ailing Marks & Spencer. Rose himself had bought and sold 200,000 shares in M&S between 10 March and 5 April. He was now eyeing M&S as a bid target with a private equity group.

Do you:

a) Assume Green is about to make his move and is sounding you out to see if you are in. If so you might already be in possession of privileged, price-sensitive information or will soon be so should not say or do anything and in particular not buy any M&S shares because of the risk to your reputation of the allegation of insider-dealing?

b) Realise that if you don't buy before that 12 May meeting then the moment you meet Green he might make you an insider so you will be banned from dealing but determine your reputation is worth much more than a fast £100k at the risk of an FSA investigation?

c) Decide this is too good to miss – especially as Green has not actually given you any inside information or even mentioned M&S so you have an explanation if asked – and even if you don't exactly need £100k (you can never have enough money) within 90 minutes (when coincidentally you happen to speak to your broker) you buy 100,000 shares for £276,000?

Question Two

Stuart Rose is a respected City figure with many influential contacts. He has been approached by the feared high street predator Philip Green and asked to join his gang who are planning to rape and pillage the ailing but asset rich M&S. Rose rejects Green's offer because he does not want to work for Ming the Merciless. Rose has his own plans for M&S which do not include Green. Green, however, makes Rose sign a confidentiality agreement which means he cannot reveal Ming's plan to third parties.

Do you:

a) Take a vow of silence on leaving Green and never mention him or M&S until Green's bid is public knowledge?

b) When subsequently asked to lunch by Deutsche Bank and when meeting friends at the Chelsea Flower Show, disclaim any knowledge of Green's ambitions or your own for M&S but suggest unspecified good things could be happening and now is not the time to sell?

c) In conversations with old friends such as the City dealer Michael Spencer of ICAP, who know that you want to be boss of M&S, perhaps agree with his view that the shares could well be undervalued despite their recent rise, especially if you were to be involved, while in no way mentioning Green or his intentions?

Question Three

Stuart Rose, the much wanted chief executive who works wonders with high street stores, is approached by his old employer M&S which is desperate to fend off the FUKU retailer who has announced he intends to bid. Green's announcement on 27 May sends the already rising M&S price skyward to 360p giving Rose a £84,000 profit with no doubt more to come on the 100,000 shares purchased after the conversation with Green. The City suspects Rose will get the call and sees him as the man to revive M&S so another reason for the shares to go up.

Do you:

a) Immediately inform M&S of your embarrassingly well-timed purchase after the call from its enemy Green, admit it is all most regrettable and announce the full facts publicly?

b) Volunteer to announce you will sell the shares immediately and give the proceeds to charity while buying another 100,000 at the current post-Green price?

c) Say only that you are a shareholder, gloss over the Green approach and hope for the best while waiting for an appropriate time to make the purchase public when it will attract least notice?

Question Four

Paul Myners, the City's Mr Corporate Governance and the new chairman of M&S, has agreed that Stuart Rose is the man to save M&S from the dreaded Ming the Merciless. Rose has admitted he is an M&S shareholder. Nearly three weeks later Rose provides details which, on admission or investigation, show that he bought after he was approached by Green but before he was approached by M&S.

Do you:

a) Declare this is not what is expected of the chief executive of a national treasure such as M&S which cannot be run by a greedy sleazeball who is likely to be investigated by the FSA for possible insider-dealing and sack Rose immediately?

b) Suggest Rose can stay but only if he publicly admits his mistake and donates the £80,000 profit to charity, perhaps to the M&S pension fund which has a £670m black hole so as to avoid any suggestion of impropriety or illegal profiteering?

c) Say privately it is all most regrettable but defeating Green is more important than any fuddy-duddy principles of morality or City rules and continue to publicly support the tainted Rose?

"We've arranged for home delivery"

Question Five

Paul Myners is the City's Mr Clean, champion of corporate transparency and chairman of the critic of capitalism, the Guardian Media Group. He learns that the new chief executive Stuart Rose bought 100,000 shares in M&S after a telephone call from bidder Philip Green.

This embarrassing sequence of events will emerge once all the details of the share purchase are revealed as these will contain the date of purchase. Green will spot the connection with his call and blow your saviour away. Directors are supposed to reveal details of their share-dealing within five days and the company is required to inform the Stock Exchange within 24 hours of that notification. It is now 16 days since Rose was made chief executive and 19 days since he informed you that he was a shareholder.

Do you:

a) Immediately publish the full details of the Rose purchase as required by the companies act and the Stock Exchange rules giving the date of purchase and price as well as the number of shares and let the chips fall where they may?

b) Publicly declare your regret for the delay in publishing the full facts, apologise and blame Rose who makes a similar apology?

c) Announce merely that Rose owns 135,000 shares without saying when he bought the 100,000 or at what price. Sneak out the partial announcement immediately rejecting Green's increased bid hoping nobody notices and, if they do, decline until there is no choice to provide the information?

Those candidates who, like Stuart Rose and Paul Myners, believe the correct answers to each question was c) will hopefully receive a stern reeducation in best City practice from the FSA and

THE DIRECTORS — DREDGE & RIGG

THIS QUOTE FROM MEGACORP IS VERY, VERY COMPETITIVE...
HAVE OUR GUYS CHECKED IT OUT?
YEP! IT'S HERE IN THE REPORT...
SIR JULIAN REALLY SAID HE'LL "CRUSH YOU LIKE AN INSECT"!

Number crunching

£10m ■ Total remuneration of Sir Peter Davis in four years as Sainsbury's chairman

£100m ■ Expected profits plunge at Sainsbury's this year

£100 ■ Traditional Christmas bonus Sainsbury's staff were told they wouldn't get last year

– less likely – offer their resignations.

The FSA will no doubt also have some different and difficult questions for those various friends of Rose and Green who also found irresistible the attraction of buying large numbers of M&S shares or options in the weeks before Ming made his move.

The brothers Simon and David Reuben, who know Green from Monaco and had discussions with Rose about bidding for M&S, should be asked how often in the past they had bought M&S options before 11 March (four days before they discussed a possible bid for M&S with bankers BNP Paribas) when they bought 760,000 "call" options. They bought options on a further 600,000 shares on 15 April. The 760,000 options were sold on 11 June after Green's bid for a profit of £437,000. Options are always the best way to bet on a bid as the risk-reward ratio is very much in buyers' favour as the outlay is small and the gearing impact substantial. The Reubens paid 6p for each of the 760,000 options and sold for 63p-64p.

Tom Hunter, a long-time backer of Green, should be asked how often he had bought 375,000 or any similar six-figure block of M&S for his children's trust fund before the 375,000 he bought for the trust on 16 April.

And Michael Spencer, recently named as the City's richest man, should be asked how often before he met Rose on 10 May, two days before the latter was due to see Green, he had bought a contract for difference (CFD) on two million M&S shares worth £5.5m or any similar number of shares? CFDs are a discreet alternative to options but giving a similar stake in any price rise. Spencer has already made £1.7m.

If the answer to those questions is "not at all", "not in that size" or "not for a long time", then perhaps the FSA should start earning its keep. Whether any of the friends were in possession of inside information – which they all totally deny – is an open question. The deals are all said to be coincidental or inspired by non-inside information. Green had the information of his intentions so he could make them insiders. But he too denies doing so other than in circumstances, as with Rose, where they were required not to deal.

Rose too had M&S ambitions which he had discussed with the Reubens and others. But when is an ambition or intention inside information? Does a call to a meeting count or a well-informed guess without direct knowledge from the bidder?

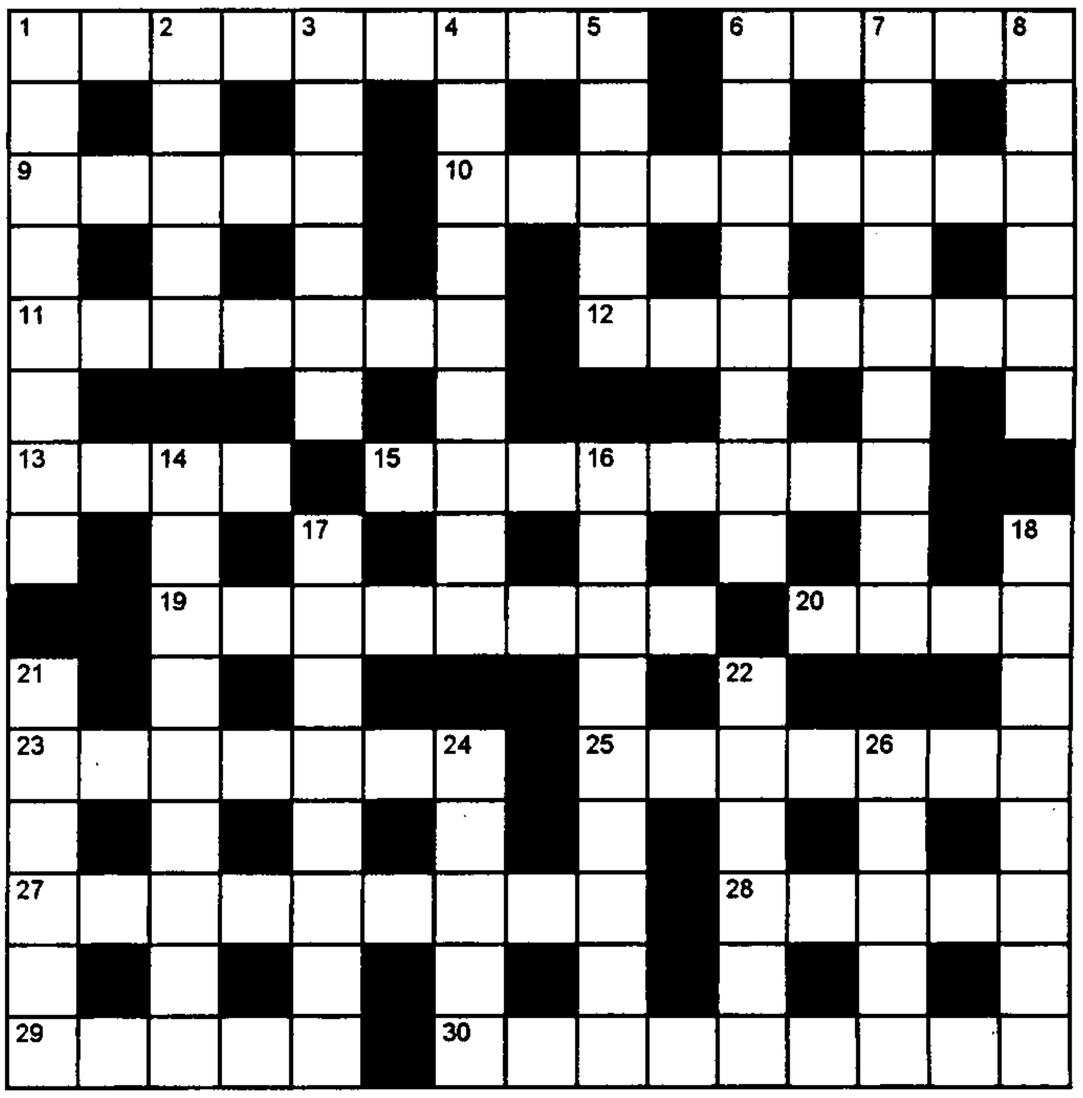
This is all uncharted territory for the FSA. And this time it is going up against not just rich suits but billionaires. The record of the FSA's predecessor, the Department of Timidity & Inaction, in similar cases of high-profile investigations involving Jeffrey Archer and John Ritblat do not inspire confidence.

And if everyone keeps on repeating the same story – which of course is the truth – then it could be hard to prove that anyone has done anything wrong. Not that any purchasers of M&S shares have. Except that it all looks like a group of rich men who all know each other finding it hard to resist the temptation to make money even when they should.

'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 265

by Cyclops



£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 16 July 2004.

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk

ACROSS

1 City shag gets one learning (9)
6 To be the cause of an erection and made a fool of (3,2)
9 Royal family party during perverted period of sexual excitement (5)
10 Not like Long John Silver to, it's said, start to leave on being subjected to urges (3-6)
11 Periodically late, so unpaid (7)
12 One who's accustomed to some sexual activity in colour (7)
13/15 Union standing for berk element's shift to right (4-8)
19 Pair of British firearms Penny gets out (8)
20 Fit once to get into Sally's skirts (4)
23 Handyman's set Dick against pussy (7)
25 When you expect to get landed with "externalised mangled nuts" disease (7)
27 Leaderless IRA elite's involvement with US not working (2,7)
28 Free Brenda? There's a proviso (5)
29 Film company makes fuss about penetrating Kay twice (5)
30 Elton finally chooses right queer large glasses (9)

DOWN

1 Arse, however, half functions as a clock (8)
2/26/17 Two pokes taking a couple of seconds, know what I mean? (5,5,4,4)
3 Pitt in "Casualty" to go in for frottage? (6)
4 Not hotter getting screwed without a break (2,3,4)
5 'New Age' Conservative gets in – hope abandoned (5)
6 Not exactly black and white when Bush's nos.1 and 3 walked out (8)
7 Scrooge pissed on rat (5,4)
8 Falsies could be soft and stuck on (6)
14 Rather involved without me member given a greasing (9)
16 They might be flashed by babes to get money out of Hampstead Heath (4-5)
17 See 2
18 Rose about to pierce organ's carbuncles (8)
21 Belligerent action from America's premier: time to change course? (6)
22 Speaker alone cannot produce such an effect (6)
24 Outcast Russian's concealed surgical appliance (5)
26 See 2

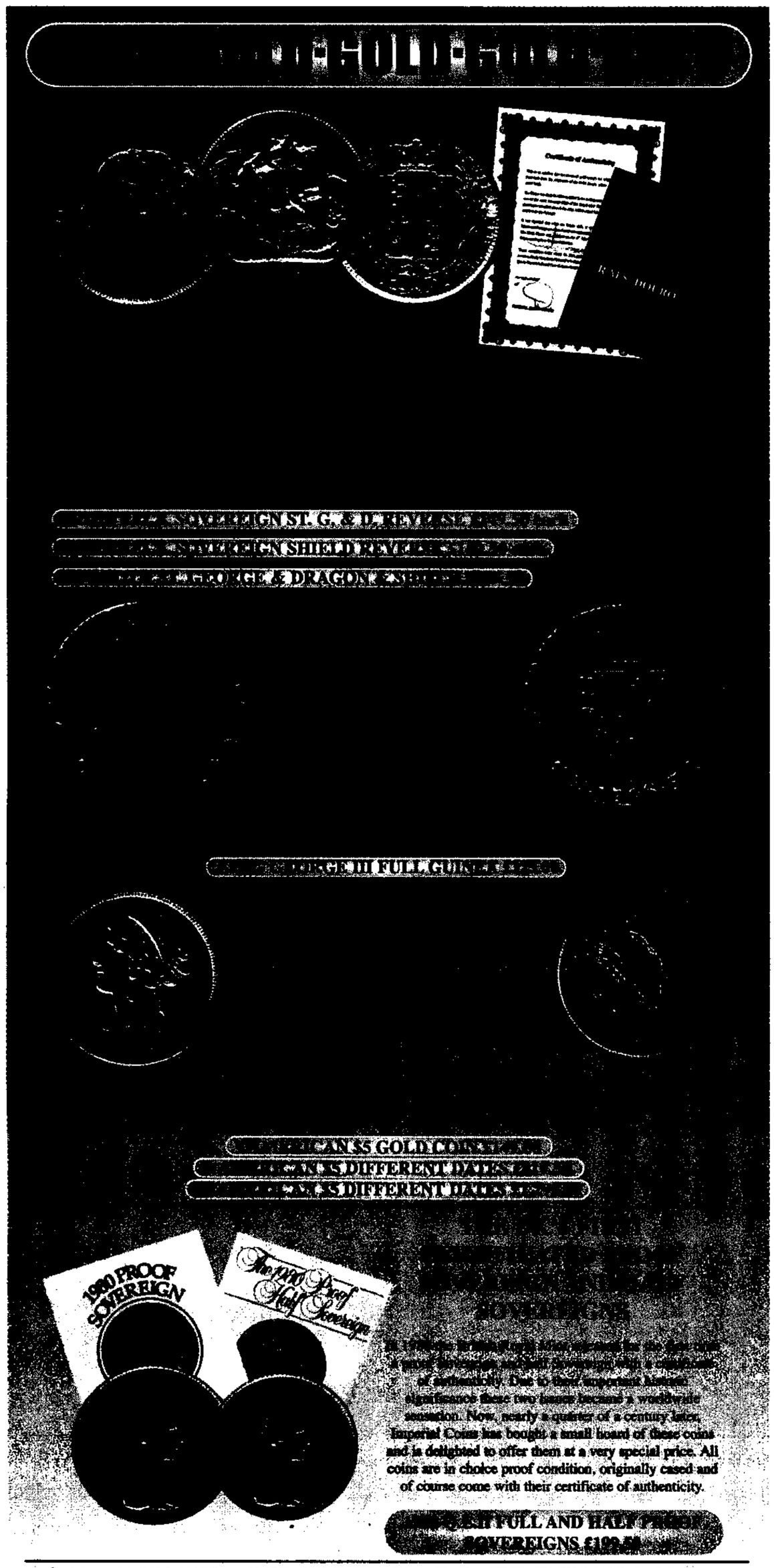
Crossword 264 winner: CATRIONA HARRISON

ACROSS: 1/5 Extreme ironing 9 Gen up 10 Tentacled 11 Itchy palm 12 Tango 13 Hepcat 15 Unbeaten 18 Cheekily 19 Panic 22 Audit 24 Good on you 26 Non-person 27 Islet 28/29 Limited company.

DOWN: 1/18 English Channel 2 Tunic 3 Empty talk 4 Extras 5 Ignominy 6 Op Art 7 Islington 8/20 Gods own country 14 Pseudonym 16 Euphonium 17 Elegised 21 Cognac 23 Theft* 25 Yalta.

** The clue to 23dn. wrongly suggested the FT was a Murdoch title. To solvers, the Financial Times / Pearson plc and anyone else misled and distressed by the apparent addition to the Murdoch empire, Cyclops apologises for his clanger.*

HUSBAND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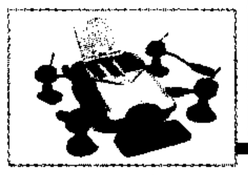

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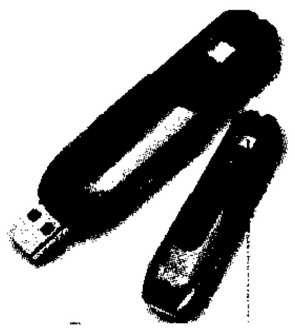

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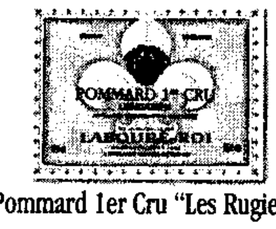


Pommard 1er Cru "Les Rugiens"

Beaune 1er Cru "Cent Vignes"

*This wooden case contains **2** bottles of each of the above mentioned wines:*

The 12 bottle case **£ 246 in bond ex VAT** (£ 306,39 incl. VAT DP free delivery)

Tasting Case Olivier Leflaive 2003

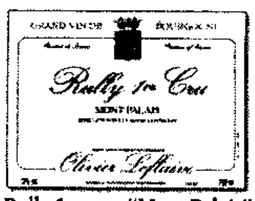
One Grand Cru and five 1ers Crus white

Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru

Chablis 1er cru "Vaillons"

Puligny-Montrachet 1er cru "Les Chalumaux"

Saint-Aubin 1er cru "Chatenières"

Chassagne-Montrachet 1er cru "Clos St-Marc"

Rully 1er cru "Mont Palais"

*This wooden case contains **2** bottles of each of the above mentioned wines:*

The 12 bottle case **£ 181 in bond ex VAT** (£ 230,02 incl. VAT DP free delivery)

	Number of bottles / case	*£ per bottle in bond ex VAT*	*£ case price DP incl. VAT free delivery*
■ Louis Latour			
■ GRANDS CRUS RED			
Charmes Chambertin Grand Cru	6	76,00	544,47
Mazis-Chambertin Grand Cru	6	93,00	664,32
Clos Vougeot Grand Cru	6	69,00	495,12
Romanée-Saint-Vivant Grand Cru "Les Quatre Journaux"	6	*Very limited availability, price on application*	
❤ **Château Corton Grancey Grand Cru**	**6**	**50,00**	**361,17**
■ 1ers CRUS RED			
Aloxe-Corton 1er cru "Les Chaillots"	12	*Very limited availability, price on application*	
Pommard 1er cru "Epenots"	12	32,00	468,54
Pommard 1er cru "Rugiens"	12	35,00	510,84
❤ **Volnay 1er cru "En Chevret"**	**12**	**27,00**	**398,04**
❤ **Moret-Saint-Denis 1er cru "Clos des Ormes"**	**12**	**38,00**	**553,14**
Vosne-Romanée 1er cru "Malconsort"	12	57,00	821,04
■ Faiveley			
■ GRAND CRU RED			
Latricières-Chambertin Grand Cru	6	*Very limited availability, price on application*	
■ 1ers CRUS RED			
Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Clos des Issarts"	12	22,00	327,54
Beaune 1er Cru "Clos de l'Ecu"	12	15,00	228,84
■ RED VILLAGE			
Nuits-Saint-Georges "Les Argillats" (in boxes)	12	18,00	271,14
Pommard "Les Vaumuriens" (in boxes)	12	18,00	271,14
■ Labouré-Roi			
■ GRANDS CRUS RED			
Clos de Vougeot Grand Cru	6	28,00	206,07
Echezeaux Grand Cru	6	25,00	184,92
❤ **Charmes Chambertin Grand Cru**	**6**	**27,00**	**199,02**
■ 1ers CRUS RED			
❤ **Nuits Saint Georges 1er cru "Les Damodes"**	**12**	**16,00**	**242,94**
Pommard 1er cru "Les Rugiens" Domaine Pont	12	15,00	228,94
Volnay 1er cru "Clos des Chênes"	12	12,00	186,54
Beaune 1er cru "Cent Vignes" Château de Savigny	12	9,00	144,24
■ RED VILLAGE			
❤ **Gevrey Chambertin Village "Château de Gevrey"**	**12**	**12,00**	**186,54**
■ GRANDS CRUS WHITE			
❤ **Chablis Grand Cru "Les Clos"**	**6**	**19,00**	**142,62**
Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru	6	28,00	206,07
❤ **Montrachet Grand Cru**	**6**	**89,00**	**636,12**
■ 1er CRU WHITE			
Puligny-Montrachet 1er cru "Les Champs Gains"	12	18,00	271,14
■ Olivier Leflaive			
■ GRANDS CRUS WHITE			
Chablis Grand Cru "Valmur"	6	20,00	149,67
❤ **Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru**	**6**	**30,00**	**220,17**
Montrachet Grand Cru	6	*Very limited availability, price on application*	
Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru	6	*Very limited availability, price on application*	
■ 1ers CRUS WHITE			
Chablis 1er Cru "Montée de Tonnerre"	12	11,00	172,44
❤ **Chablis 1er cru "Vaillons"**	**12**	**11,00**	**172,44**
Meursault 1er cru "Charmes"	12	19,00	285,24
Meursault 1er cru "Perrières"	12	23,00	341,64
Puligny-Montrachet 1er cru "Les Chalumaux"	12	18,00	271,14
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❤ **Saint-Aubin 1er cru "Chatenières"**	**12**	**10,00**	**158,34**
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❤ **Rully 1er cru "Mont Palais"**	**12**	**8,00**	**130,14**
■ J.J. Vincent			
Château Fuissé "Vieilles Vignes" Pouilly-Fuissé	12	15,00	228,84
Château Fuissé "Les Brûlés" Pouilly-Fuissé	12	14,00	214,74
Château Fuissé "Les Combettes" Pouilly-Fuissé	12	14,00	214,74
Château Fuissé "Le Clos" Pouilly-Fuissé	12	14,00	214,74
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❤ **Beaune 1er cru "Cent Vignes"**	**12**	**12,00**	**186,54**
■ 1er CRU WHITE			
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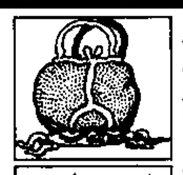

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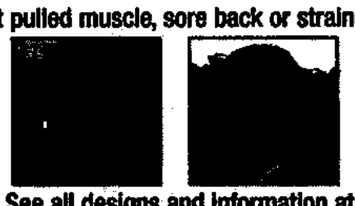

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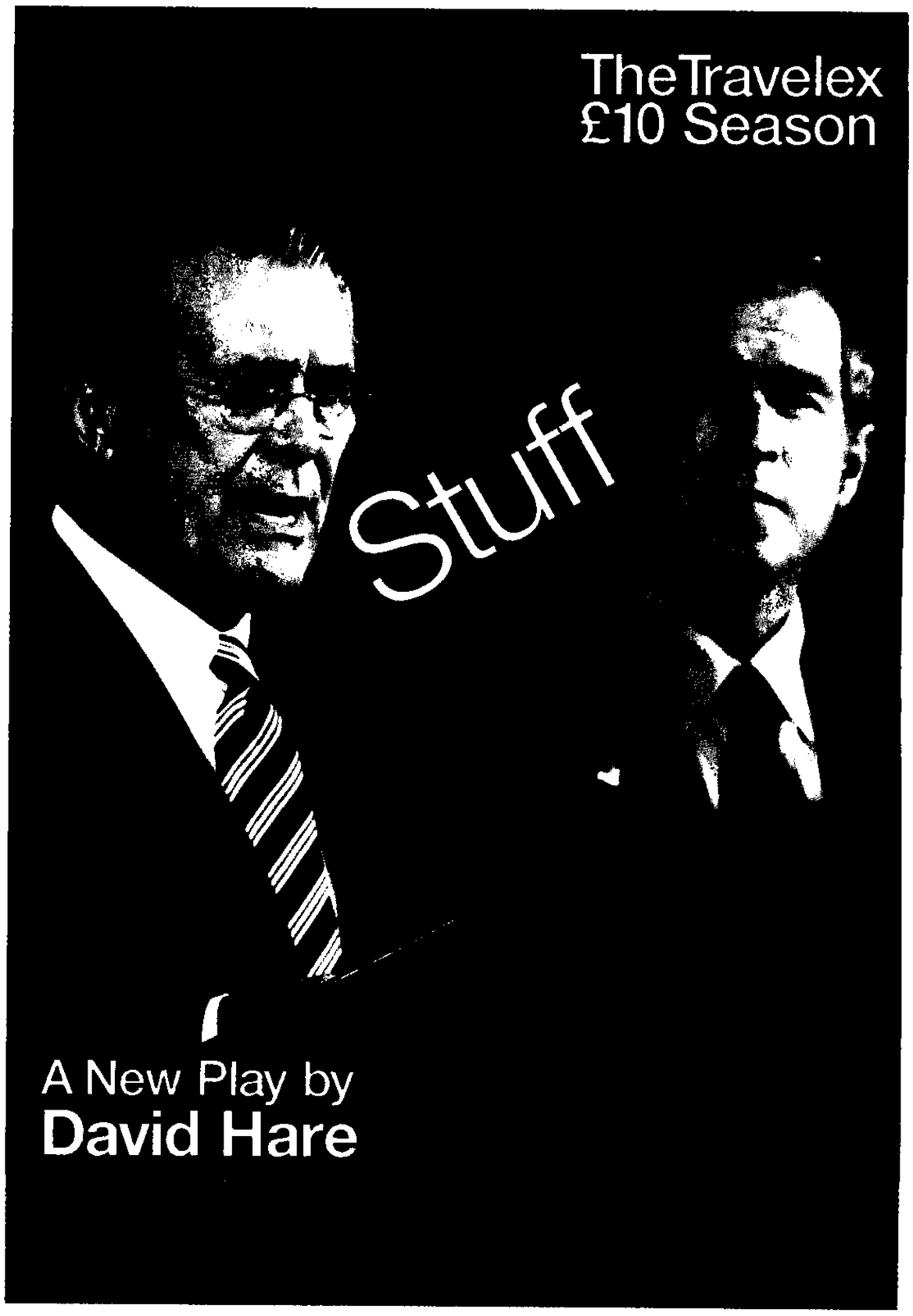

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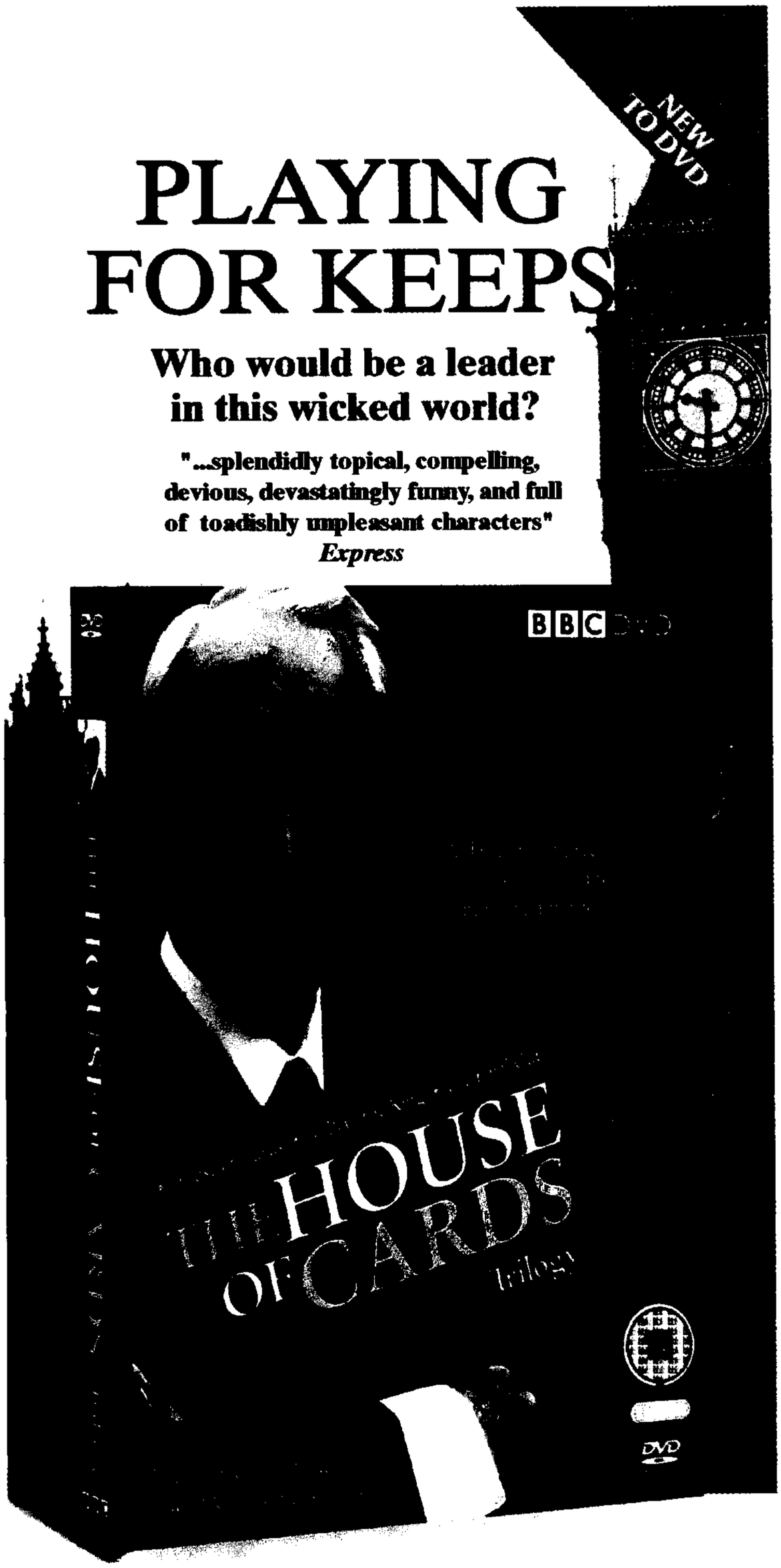
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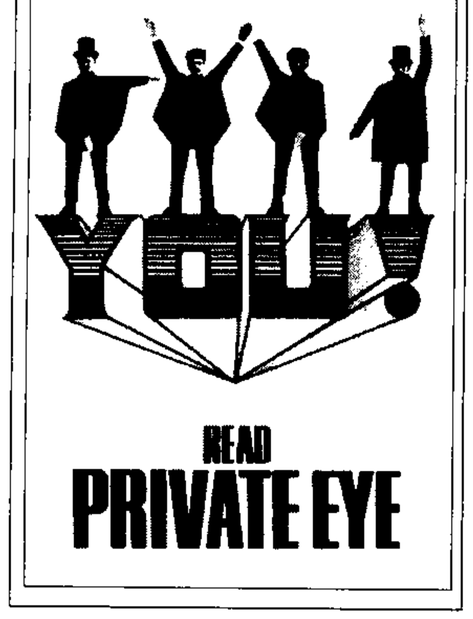

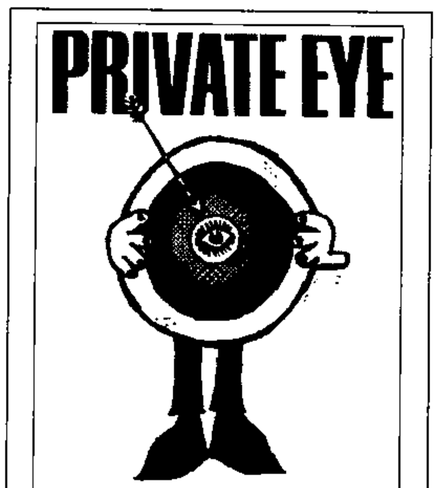

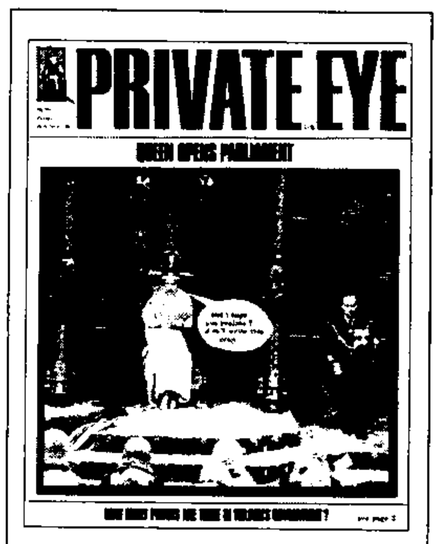

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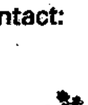

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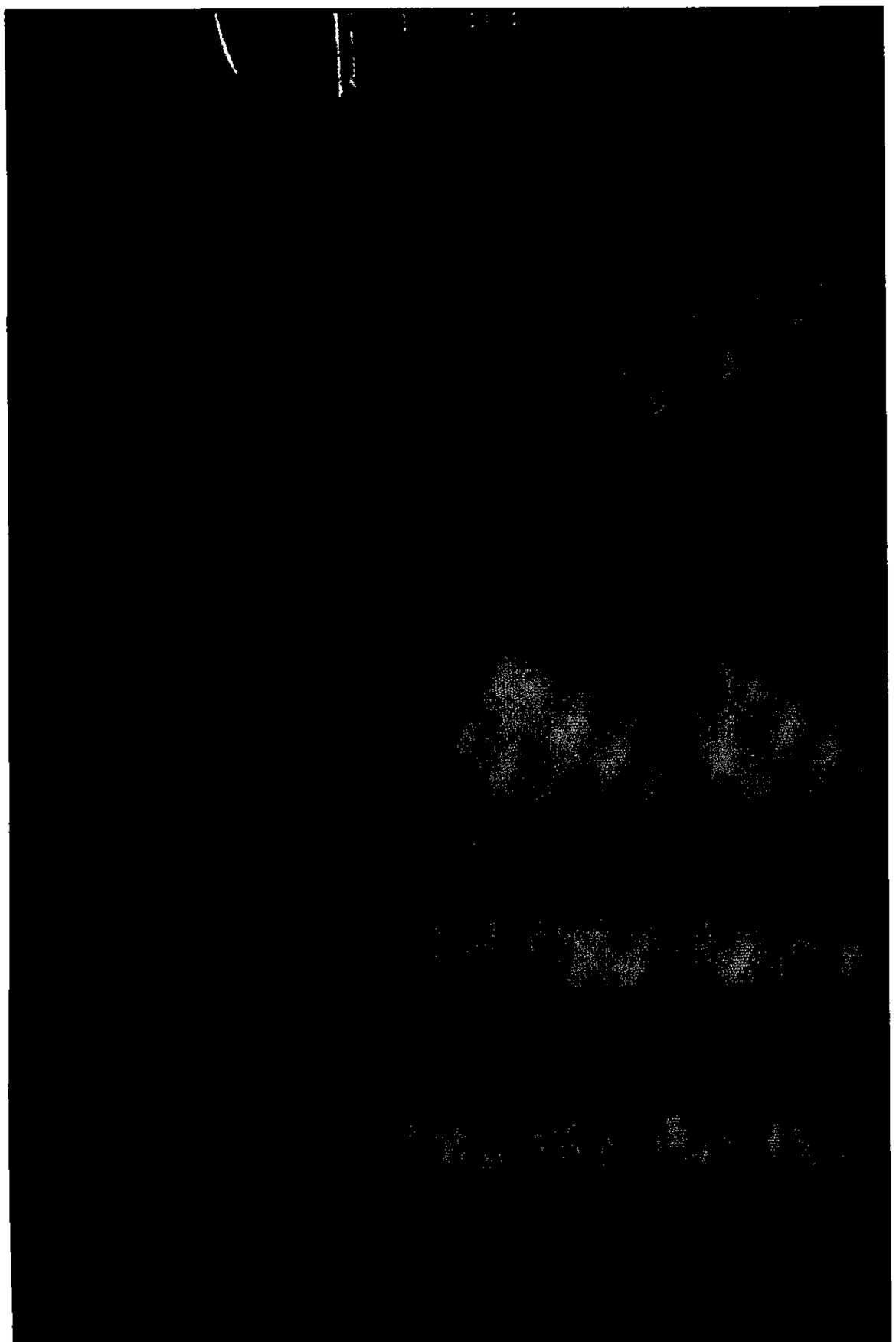

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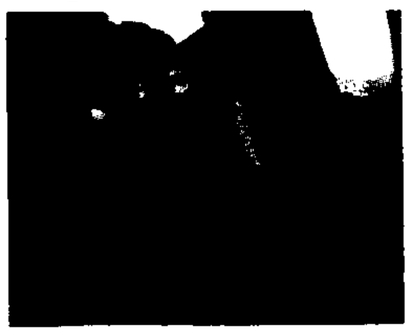

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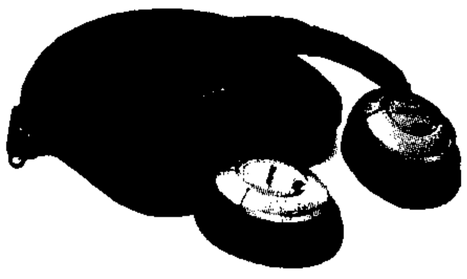

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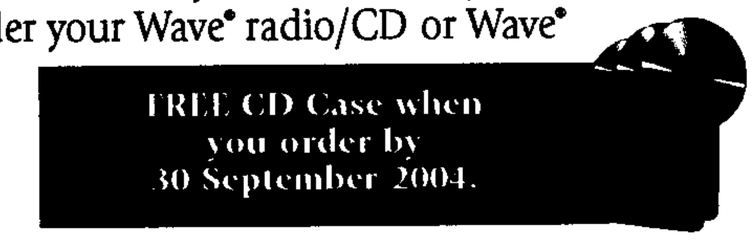

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